

Agenda

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Thursday, 9 March 2023 at 5.00 pm
In the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Members to declare any interests and party whips in relation to matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes

7 - 14

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 West Bromwich E-Scooter Trial Zone Review

15 - 54

To consider and comment upon the West Bromwich E-Scooter Trial Zone Review.



6	Bus Service Improvement Plan	55 - 186
	To consider and comment upon the Bus Service Improvement Plan.	
7	Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan	187 - 200
	To note and review the Board's Work programme 2022/23 and the Cabinet forward Plan.	

Shokat Lal

Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House

Freeth Street

Oldbury

West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor Simms (Chair)

Councillors Taylor (Vice- Chair), Abrahams, Chambers, Fenton, Gavan, J
Giles, Z Hussain, Kaur, Owen and Rahman

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Information about meetings in Sandwell



If you are attending the meeting and require assistance to access the venue, please contact Democratic Services (democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk).



If the fire alarm sounds, please follow the instructions of the officers present and leave the building by the nearest exit.



Only people invited to speak at a meeting may do so. Everyone at the meeting is expected to be respectful and listen to the discussion.



Agendas with reports with exempt information should be treated as private and confidential. It is your responsibility to ensure that any such reports are kept secure. After the meeting confidential papers should be disposed of in a secure way.



This meeting may be recorded and broadcast on the Internet. If this is the case, it will be confirmed at the meeting and further information will be provided.



You are allowed to use devices for the purposes of recording or reporting during the public session of the meeting. When using your devices they must not disrupt the meeting – please ensure they are set to silent.



Members who cannot attend the meeting should submit apologies by contacting Democratic Services (democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk)



All agenda, reports, minutes for Sandwell Council's meetings, councillor details and more are available from our [website](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

9 February 2023 at 5.00pm
in Committee Room 2 - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillors Taylor (Vice Chair), Fenton, J Giles, Kaur, Owen and Rahman.

Officers: Tammy Stokes (Service Manager - Spatial Planning and Growth), Andy Miller (Strategic Planning and Transport Manager), Samantha Holder (Senior Planner), Alex Goddard (Democratic Services Officer) and John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).

1/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simms (Chair) and Abrahams.

2/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

3/23 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 are confirmed as a correct record.

4/23 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

Friar Park Urban Village

The Board received a report in relation to the Masterplan proposals for a Friar Park Urban Village.

The proposals outlined the largest development in Sandwell, with up to 630 new homes with approximately 10 hectares of public open space (which represented a net increase).

The Service Manager - Spatial Planning and Growth provided the Board with an overview of the consultation activity that had taken place on the proposals, which included:-

- A dedicated website for the consultation with an online form for residents to complete to share their views;
- Two drop-in sessions, held on a Friday and a Saturday at the Millennium Centre which was adjacent to the development site;
- Promotion of the consultation campaign via Council social media posts and a letter drop to every household in Friar Park as well as a neighbouring estate;
- A joint press release with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The Board was advised that 57 responses were received to the consultation. It was acknowledged that whilst this number was low, the site had been allocated for residential redevelopment since 2004.

In general respondents to the consultation were supportive of the proposals, but not entirely, with a number of concerns highlighted including:-

- The existing community centre that serves the local area, the Millennium Centre, was not large enough to serve an additional 630 homes.
- School and GP provision were felt by respondents to currently be inadequate, even without the development moving forward.

The Board noted that the draft Masterplan had been amended taking into account the feedback that had been received during the consultation. This included allocation of

space to potentially expand the Millennium Centre as well as changes to the layout to address concerns around specific elements such as preventing access by trail bikes which was an issue for residents in the Friar Park ward.

Members stated that they had been contacted by a local campaign group which had set out its concerns including around the contamination of the site and the environmental impact.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- In addition to officers from the Regeneration and Growth directorate, officers from Highways were also in attendance at the drop-in sessions.
- Members sought clarity around how it had been determined that no additional schools would be required for a development of 630 houses.
- A GP practice had been identified in Friar Park where there could be capacity for expansion if it was determined by the NHS to be required.
- The Council's Library Service had requested, in the event that the Millennium Centre was expanded, for a permanent library space to build on the current arrangements for a small temporary library in the Centre.
- Due to the nature of the proposals, including a detailed plan, it wasn't possible to carry out consultation by telephone.
- Some site investigations have taken place which confirmed the site was contaminated. The ground condition would remain in a contaminated state if the development did not proceed and remediation works took place.
- Further details around the provision of Affordable Housing on the site and the projected impact on waiting lists for Council housing was requested.

Members felt that in order to identify recommendations to Cabinet on the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan it was necessary to arrange an additional meeting of the Board to include a wide range of input from technical officers and partners.

Resolved that an additional meeting of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board be arranged to consider the Friar Park Urban Village in more detail, including input from a range of Council service areas as well as partners.

(Councillor Gavan entered the meeting during consideration of this item)

6/23 **Sandwell Development Plan**

The Board received a presentation on the Sandwell Development Plan, which formed part of the hierarchy of plans that directed and informed what was built and where.

Every local authority had a Development Plan, which usually covered a 15-year period although it was possible to address emerging issues through partial reviews of the Plan.

The Board noted that there were two tiers of plan; the Black Country Core Strategy which set out broad locations (not identify specific sites) and the Site Allocations and Area Action Plans that did identify sites for specific purposes. Underneath these documents were a range of supplementary planning documents that provided guidance on issues.

It was reported that Sandwell had an identified need for 27,873 new homes, however the Urban Capacity Study had indicated only 9,158 could be delivered. Originally it had been proposed to address this through the Black Country Plan under the Localism Act 2011 Duty to Co-operate. The Black Country Plan had identified infrastructure requirements, addressed climate matters and supported a range of sub-regional and regional strategic aims. However due to the insurmountable need to build some of the houses required for the Black Country on Green Belt land Dudley MBC had withdrawn for political reasons.

As a sub-regional plan was no longer possible, it was now urgent for Sandwell to review its own local plan. Consultation had commenced during the week of this meeting and would run until 20 March 2023. Following this a draft plan would be prepared which would again be subject to further consultation. After this a final plan would be developed, with consultation anticipated to take place in the second half of 2024. After this the plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State who would arrange for the 'Examination in Public'. Timescales for that element of the process would depend on availability of the Planning Inspectorate. It was estimated that adoption of the Sandwell Local Plan would be in late 2025/early 2026.

At this early stage of the process the Council was seeking views of local people, businesses and stakeholders on what the key land issues were for Sandwell. Officers highlighted the importance of this and asked members to speak to residents and encourage them to submit their views.

There was a Call for Sites exercise taking place, to allow anyone to identify sites that could be potentially redeveloped. These would then be assessed. Although there was a size threshold for inclusion in the plan (no housing sites less than 10 units, no employment land smaller than 4.5 hectares), the Council still welcomed all suggestions as they could all contribute to the authority's targets for housing and employment land provision.

The Board also noted an overview of the programme of planning reform being undertaken by the Government. It had been stressed that although there would be change, local authorities should not delay reviewing local plans and should continue to carry out reviews under existing arrangements. Sandwell had made the decision to continue with the review, although other councils had paused activity.

From the comments and questions by members of the Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted:-

- At the current stage of the consultation it was not proposed to hold any drop-in events, however at the next stage this would be arranged.

- As part of the Call for Sites exercise all land owners that submitted to the Black County Plan would be contacted as their situations may have changed.
- If the public knew of sites that were underused or derelict and let the Council know they could be assessed, the land owner could potentially be worked with and the site could be considered for allocation.
- Education, Health, Public Health were statutory consultees. Licensing was also consulted.
- The basic definition of Affordable Housing was set nationally and could not be altered locally. The Council could look at percentages of Affordable Housing it would seek on developments, however it was acknowledged that this could impact on the viability of sites – land remediation costs in Sandwell were often high due to the area’s industrial heritage and increased Affordable Housing requirements could place further pressure on developers which could make developments economically unviable.
- The impact of building large facilities such as Police Stations or NHS facilities on surrounding areas needed to be considered.
- It was intended to include draft inset areas which looked at specific centres and the issues particular to them. This would vary from centre to centre and if land use provided a solution policy could be developed to address it.
- Some matters, such as surface materials, would need to be addressed through Design Codes and were not the remit of the Local Plan.
- The importance of linking with the Local Transport Plan (West Midlands Combined Authority) was vital.

The Board thanked officers for attending the meeting.

(Councillor Z Hussain left the meeting during consideration of this item and did not return)

7/23

Cabinet Forward Plan and Work Programme

The Board noted its Work Programme for the remainder of 2022/2023 and received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Meeting ended at 6:39pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

9 March 2023

Subject:	West Bromwich E-Scooter Trial Zone Review
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Andy Miller – Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments on the E-scooter Trial that operated in West Bromwich between December 2020 and November 2022.
- 1.2 That the Board makes any recommendations it feels appropriate for consideration by Cabinet in the event that a future request is received by an E-scooter hire company to operate in Sandwell.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board requested an opportunity to comment on the operation of the E-scooter trial in West Bromwich and where appropriate make recommendations to Cabinet to be considered prior to any decision on future E-scooter hire schemes in Sandwell following the ending of the trial in November 2022.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	People live well and age well E-scooters may encourage modal shift away private car use for short trips, reducing air pollution and decreasing the associated risks of lung and heart damage.
	Strong resilient communities E-scooters offer increased accessibility into West Bromwich town centre for communities who use the centre as a local hub.
	A strong and inclusive economy E-Scooters are a new micro-mobility technology and the operation of an E-scooter trial zone helps establish Sandwell as a centre of innovation. E-scooters offer increased accessibility into West Bromwich town centre strengthening its role as a social, retail, educational and employment centre.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell The provision of E-scooters may encourage modal shift from car use for short trips, improving air quality and reducing emissions.

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 E-scooters are a relatively new form of personal transport that has emerged as technology, cost effective manufacturing, and batteries improve. They have become a regular sight in many cities around the world and public sharing/hire schemes are common.
- 4.2 Although their use on the public highway, including footways, is currently illegal in the UK, their sale is not. As a result, there are now large numbers of E-scooters in private ownership and unlawful usage on the public highway is widespread with effective enforcement extremely difficult.



4.3 There is no doubt that micro-mobility technology such as E-scooters can, in an urban context, help with providing easy first and last mile access to destinations. However, as with any emerging technology, there are concerns about unintended consequences such as the safety of riders and other road users such as pedestrians; the implications for the visually impaired are of particular concern. Indeed, the National Federation of the Blind has opposed E-scooter trials in the UK on the basis that they pose a risk for blind and partially sighted people. Operators have continued to engage at a national level with organisations representing the visually impaired.

4.4 As part of a wider initiative to promote active and micro-mobility transport as part of a green and healthy recovery from Covid19, the then Secretary of State for Transport announced in early Summer 2020 that the twelve-month long E-scooter trials already being planned by the Department for Transport (DfT) would be bought forward to enable them to commence from July of that year. The objectives of the trials included:

- Providing faster access to more places;
- Accelerating the ability of the transport system to return to normal post-pandemic;
- Off-setting the potential for a mass reversion to car use in urban areas;
- Supporting a healthy and green re-start post-pandemic;
- Providing learning;
 - Improving the evidence base, which globally is inconclusive;
 - Understanding if E-scooters could be made safer if they are not safe enough;
 - Informing future legislation and/or regulation (particularly important following the transport select committee's recommendation to legalise E-scooter use in the UK and the government's subsequent announcement that it intends to do so);
 - Better understanding of pricing models.

4.5 Within its guidance for the trials, the DfT stated that E-scooters would continue to fall within the statutory definition of a motor vehicle. The specifics of what constitutes an E-Scooter are contained at Appendix A.



- 4.6 Following a full procurement process led by TfWM in conjunction with Birmingham City Council (as lead authority), Swedish micro-mobility firm Voi were nominated as the sole operator for trials being held in the West Midlands. Voi were also appointed to run trials in Northamptonshire, Bristol, Cambridge and Liverpool. Voi appointed a dedicated West Midlands operational manager, as well as fleet, charging and maintenance teams across the region to support the trials.

The West Bromwich Trial

- 4.7 Sandwell's trial formed part of a regionally coordinated programme of E-scooter trials for the West Midlands. These have been managed in a close partnership between Local Highway Authorities, TfWM and the chosen operator Voi. Local Highway Authorities led on the zone identification, road safety and traffic management issues, whilst Voi has been responsible for the operation of the E-scooters themselves and the online platform for hiring scooters. TfWM has supported through coordination, resourcing and facilitation.
- 4.8 West Bromwich was originally chosen as the location for the Sandwell element of the trial based on its high footfall (as the primary retail and commercial centre in the borough); low speed roads (due to West Bromwich's 20mph zone); transport links (in particular West Midlands Metro and West Bromwich Bus Station); day time population (estimated pre-Covid at approximately 13,600) and size (just over one square mile). The trial zone boundary is shown on the plan at Appendix B.
- 4.9 The main particulars of the West Bromwich trial were;
- Ran initially for six months but was subsequently extended to coincide with the end of the intended end of the Voi contract in November 2022*.

* Subsequently the West midlands Voi contract was further extended to 28th February 2023. Sandwell chose not to extend the trial accordingly.



- Hired E-scooters could only be used within the defined Trial Zone (private E-scooters remain illegal) and usage was governed by the rules set out in the operational playbook (see Appendix C).
- Operating hours were 06.00 to 20.00.
- E-scooters had a maximum speed of 12.5m and were restricted to roads with a speed limit of 30mph or lower.
- Wearing of helmets was advised but not mandatory.
- Users had to be eighteen or over and hold a driving license (including provisional licenses).
- E-scooters were barred from entering certain areas within the trial zone. These areas were specified as 'no ride zones'. They were;
 - The pedestrianised section of West Bromwich High Street
 - Garden of Remembrance
 - New Square
 - Oak House Park
 - Metro Plaza
 - Private Land including Sandwell, Astle Retail Park, West Bromwich Bus Station, the shopping centres of Kings Square and Queens Square, Metro Stop walkways and platforms.
- Parking was dockless. Apart from defined 'no park zones', users could leave their scooters wherever their trip ended as long as it followed parking standards (parked on footway, upright and not blocking pedestrian movements).
- 50 scooters were deployed. There was provision to expand to 150 if demand indicated a need but this was never achieved. The operator was required to 'rebalance' the locations of E-scooters throughout the period of allowed operations.

4.10 Users booked and paid for the E-scooters using Voi's smartphone app. The basic rate was 20p per minute, or £12 per hour. The app also communicated to expectations of users and offered training around safe riding and parking as well as alerting users when they were about to leave the trial zone or enter a 'no ride zone'.

4.11 Where an E-scooter user was involved in an accident with a pedestrian, animal or vehicle that results in personal injury or property damage, the



operator was required to report the accident to Voi and the Local Highway Authority no later than 24 hours after the event, providing information concerning the accident.

- 4.12 The West Bromwich trial ended in November 2022. All the scooters were removed meaning that there is no longer any legal use of E-scooters in Sandwell.

Experience Nationally

- 4.13 There are 32 areas across England in which rental E-scooter trials have taken place, including the West Midlands, since their inception in July 2020. In the first 18 months of operation it was estimated that around 14.5 million trips were undertaken.
- 4.14 DfT commissioned an evaluation into the ongoing trials which reported in December 2022¹. It concluded that E-scooters could provide a real alternative to other modes of transport, including cars. The evaluation, examined how and why rental E-scooters are used, and by whom, as well as safety, mode shift, environmental and wider social impacts.
- 4.15 The evaluation finds evidence to suggest that as the trials became more mature, users are seeing E-scooters less as a novelty and more as a convenient mode of transport that they could use to get to specific destinations. This is reflected by the fact that the proportion of users shifting from private motor vehicles to E-scooters has been increasing over time, while mode shift from active modes has been decreasing.
- 4.16 The evaluation also brought into focus the safety record of rental E-scooters. Data highlighted in the report indicates that the frequency of rental E-scooter collisions was higher during 2021 than for pedal cycles (including bicycles and e-bikes), though this was *'likely to be driven in part by the novel nature of the mode'*.
- 4.17 It is also noted that findings show collisions were more likely to occur among less experienced users, *'making it difficult to make like-for-like comparisons with more established modes'*. While the frequency of rental



E-scooter collisions was higher than for pedal cycles, the types of injuries reported by users appeared broadly similar to the types of injuries reported by cyclists.

- 4.18 The evaluation highlighted stakeholder concerns around technical elements of the scooter design such as audibility, visibility and acceleration. Rider behaviour, particularly pavement riding, was a concern among pedestrians with mobility issues and blind or partially sighted individuals.
- 4.19 Amongst the improvements suggested in the report are greater clarity on E-scooter rules (such as parking), differences between rental and private scooters, and on safety information, segregated lanes, more on-road parking and improvements to parking bay signage.
- 4.20 The report does not cover private E-scooter use. However, it is recognised that private use is widespread and that this may affect the perceptions of the trials on behalf of non-users and the recording of safety data.
- 4.21 The Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport safety has carried research into the safety of privately-owned E-scooters in the UK². The research found that since 2019 up to the early December 2022, there were 31 deaths involving E-scooters with ages ranging from 12 years old to 75, though the latter was not a rider. Twelve riders have died in single-vehicle collisions and one pedestrian has died having been struck by someone who was riding an E-scooter. The accident rate for E-scooter journeys is around three times that for pedal cycle journeys although this should be taken in the context of the mode being quite new and the users consequently being relatively inexperienced compared to regular cyclists.
- 4.22 However, of relevance to the E-scooter rental trials, the research found rented E-scooters only accounted for four of the incidents where someone has died, one of which was the previously mentioned 75-year-old who died whilst moving a parked rental E-scooter.
- 4.23 Locally, there have been two very recent widely-reported serious incidents involving Voi scooters in Birmingham, one of which was fatal and not



included in the above figures, and the other which resulted in life-threatening injuries. The cases are currently sub-judice, however it is known that on both occasions the rider was below the legal age to hire a scooter.

1. National evaluation of e-scooter trials (ARUP et. al.)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-e-scooter-trials-report>
2. The safety of private e-scooters in the UK – PACTS research
<https://www.pacts.org.uk/the-safety-of-private-e-scooters-in-the-uk-pacts-research/>

Headline figures from the West Bromwich Trial

- 4.24 Due to the small size of the West Bromwich trial area and the limited number of scooters involved, TfWM has not carried out a specific post-trial evaluation for the scheme. The full evaluation of the trials in the West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry and Sandwell) has not yet been completed.
- 4.25 However, the Council holds monthly data supplied by Voi for the period December 2020 to August 2022. We currently do not have data for the final three months of the trial. The data covers;
- Number of unique riders
 - Reported slight and serious injury accidents
 - Total ride distance
 - Total rides
 - Estimated CO² reduction
 - Estimated number of car trips reduced
- 4.26 The monthly number of riders varied greatly, from a low figure of 117 in January 2021, to high point of 402 in June 2021. The monthly average was 223. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Autumn and Winter months generally show lower numbers than those in Spring/Summer by as much as a half.
- 4.27 The number of rides and total distance ridden follows a similar pattern; the highest number of individual rides was 1,242 in May 2022, compared to a



low of 278 in February 2021. The highest aggregate distance was 2,420km also in May 2022, whilst the lowest was 439km in January 2021.

- 4.28 Over the 21 months for which we have data there were 13 slight injury accidents reported and 1 serious. This represents 1 accident per 1982km ridden (or 1 per 1104 rides).
- 4.29 The data relating to modal shift and carbon reduction are Voi's estimates derived from information provided by users across all of its trial areas nationally. This shows that an average of 36% of E-scooter trips replace car journeys. This translates to around 5,700 car trips replaced and 2.1 tonnes of CO² reduction when applied to the West Bromwich trial.
- 4.30 As already stated, the West Bromwich trial area was very small compared to almost all other trial areas, and the level of utility or commuter trips in the other trial areas is likely to have been significantly higher as a result. Commuter trips in particular are more likely to transfer from cars but the opportunity for such trips in West Bromwich was very limited. The Voi estimates should therefore be treated with a great deal of caution.
- 4.31 However, the national evidence from the rental trials does demonstrate that E-scooters can play a role in air quality improvements and carbon reduction targets where there are genuine opportunities for modal shift in commuter and utility trips. This would equally apply to privately-owned machines.

Issues raised, lessons learned and future considerations

- 4.32 The lack of a separate evaluation of the West Bromwich trial means that some of the following is based on anecdotal evidence.
- 4.33 Safety issues relating to the use of E-scooters, both for riders and other road users including pedestrians and particularly those with mobility or sight impairment, have been regularly raised by the public, the West Bromwich BID and by the police. These concerns include poorly parked scooters blocking footways, riding of scooters on the footway,



inconsiderate and anti-social riding, 'two-up' riding, and scooters using pedestrianised areas.

- 4.34 The problem of illegal use of privately-owned E-scooters is widespread and many of the safety and anti-social behaviour concerns may result from this mis-use being conflated with the use of the trial scooters. The number of formally reported complaints was low although this cannot be taken as clear evidence that the use of the Voi scooters was less of a problem. Comments on social media, whilst not a reliable barometer, would suggest a degree of under reporting of problems.
- 4.35 In terms of parking, E-scooter docks and other designated parking locations were added to the Birmingham trial area mid-way through. Whilst it was not a requirement to use these, they proved useful in busy pedestrian areas where unfettered parking would particularly be a problem. But it should also be noted that the ability to leave a scooter at the point of destination, wherever this may be, is one of the advantages of E-scooter hire as it facilitates convenient, last-mile, direct-to-the-door journeys. If users need to use a dock or parking area some distance from the destination, it could disincentivise use.
- 4.36 Through its App, Voi offered incentives to users to park considerately by encouraging them to send photographic evidence of how the scooter was left in return for partial refunds or discounts on future hirings. Designated parking areas were considered for West Bromwich, but their benefit was considered minimal due to the small number of scooters involved.
- 4.37 In contrast with problems relating to scooter riding, reported parking problems were almost exclusively related to the rental scooters as they are readily identifiable when stationary. Private owners are unlikely to leave their scooters unattended due to the potential for theft and/or damage.
- 4.38 Riding E-scooters on the footway is illegal, although it is acknowledged that enforcement, which lies with the police, is extremely difficult. The technology around geofencing is improving all the time and in future it may be possible to geofence footways. But within the West Midlands trials, this



was not possible, meaning that there was little that could be done to prevent footway riding. Geofencing can, and did, prevent the use of rental scooters in pedestrianised areas and other no-ride zones. Nonetheless, some instances were reported which may have resulted from faulty equipment, although it is equally possible that the scooters involved were not Voi machines.

- 4.39 All of the above highlights the difficulty in both distinguishing private scooters from the Voi version, particularly when moving or in poor light conditions, but also the difficulty of identifying individual Voi scooters to enable follow up action to be taken with the user. The problems relating to misuse are not unique to the West Bromwich trial, nor indeed to rental scooters.
- 4.40 Moving to the objectives of E-scooter trials nationally, and the success or otherwise of the West Bromwich trial in meeting them. The national evidence referred to above clearly indicates that E-scooters can provide a useful addition to the range of sustainable transport options, particularly for shorter journeys which may have previously been done by car. But to successfully do this, the zone over which the hire scheme operates must cover the places that people need to travel to and from.
- 4.41 The size of the trial area and the small fleet in use in West Bromwich limited its value in terms of contributing to learning and the evidence base around the operation of E-scooters, their safe use and how future legislation is framed. In comparison, the trial in Birmingham in its final form included the greater part of the city's area and involved a fleet of 1,500 scooters.
- 4.42 For the same reason, the potential to drive modal shift away from private car use was also limited in West Bromwich. The longest realistic trip that could be carried out within the trial area was around 1km or two-thirds of a mile. Furthermore, because the residential areas within the trial zone were within easy walking distance of most of the trip attractors within the zone, the opportunity and attractiveness of end-to-end trips was limited. Indeed, there is almost certainly a relationship between the limitations of



the trial area and the differences between the overall West Bromwich experience and that reported in Birmingham, Coventry and nationally.

4.43 Finally, there is a perception that many of the rides carried out in West Bromwich, particularly in early part of the trial, were for novelty or pleasure purposes. Again, the limited potential for genuine utility or commuter trips within the trial zone would also have been a factor in this.

4.44 In summary, the conclusions reached in the West Bromwich area are;

- There were problems with poorly parked scooters.
- There were problems with widespread riding on footways.
- There were problems with riding in pedestrian areas to lesser degree.
- There were reports of poor rider behaviour on carriageway.
- There was limited scope within the trial area for genuine home to attractor, or attractor to attractor trips.
- The scope for modal shift, air quality improvement and carbon reduction was limited as a result of the previous bullet point.

The 3rd, 4th and 5th bullet points could be influenced by issues relating to the use of privately-owned, and thus illegally-used, E-scooters which is becoming increasingly common. The points related to rider behaviour are common to all of the E-scooter trials in England and are not unique to West Bromwich.

4.45 Matters that the Board may wish to consider and comment on include;

- Should any future E-scooter hire contract cover a larger area of Sandwell, possibly the whole of the borough, in order to maximise modal shift potential?
- Should any future E-scooter hire scheme include designated parking areas and scooter docks?
- Given that the use of E-scooters on the public highway is likely to be legalised during the life of the current Parliament, what issues specific to the use of hired E-scooters should be taken into account in any future scheme?



- Should rider training be mandatory prior to being able to hire a scooter?
- Any matters relating to the use of E-scooters generally that the Board considers should be raised with DfT prior to the likely legalisation.

The current position nationally

4.46 Trials (now termed ‘pilots’ by DfT) of E-scooters in the UK have been extended three times, initially to March 2022, then November 2022 and finally to May 2024. The most recent extension was intended to be sufficient to enable legislation to be introduced in 2023. This would allow a seamless transition from ‘pilot’ into legal practice. However, the current parliamentary programme is unclear as to whether the proposed Transport Bill will enable this to happen.

4.47 If the necessary primary and secondary legislation isn’t passed in time, it is plausible that DfT will once again look to extend the pilots to avoid a break in service. The DfT’s stated position remains to legalise the use of E-scooters on public highways.

The future of the West Midlands E-scooter Hire Scheme

4.48 In June 2022 WMCA took the decision to re-procure the E-scooter Hire Scheme tender. At that time the Transport Bill was slated for mid-2023. After an initial market scoping, a full procurement ran from September 2022 to January 2023. The outcome of this procurement is that a new contract for E-scooter hire in the West Midlands will be announced shortly. The West Midlands-wide contract with Voi came to an end on 28th February and all Voi scooters removed from the streets.

4.49 As the new contract is still to be finalised, there will clearly be a gap in service before its roll out. In the immediate term, E-scooters will only be operating in Birmingham under this contract although it allows for operation anywhere within the West Midlands with the approval of the individual local authorities concerned.



4.50 There is no proposal to seek Cabinet approval to enable the newly let E-Scooter hire contract to operate anywhere in Sandwell, but this will be kept under review once the Government's intentions regarding the general legalisation of the use of E-scooters on the public highway is clearer.

Integration with other transport initiatives

4.51 **Cycle hire** – There would clearly be advantages to having integration between micro-mobility hire and cycle hire. This would enable a single platform for hiring and payment, price bundles, season ticket discounts etc. For the present, the new contract will remain separate from the cycle hire contract, but the intention is to synchronise the end dates so that the next contract could potentially be for both modes.

4.52 **Mobility Hubs** - Mobility hubs are compact public spaces that bring together different transport and community services. The idea is that they can improve the accessibility of local areas and help people to avoid driving short-distance trips by offering a range of transport services in one, attractive place. A typical mobility hub would include

- WM Cycle Hire Docks
- Car club vehicles
- Secure cycle storage
- Parcel lockers
- Seating and shelters
- Travel information
- Electric car charging points

In areas operating E-scooter hire, docks for these could also be included. TfWM is shortly to trial the concept (not in Sandwell) to establish if there is a case for their wider roll out across the West Midlands.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Going forward, the Council has the following potential options;

- Sandwell does not take part in the new E-scooter Hire Scheme.



- Allow the new contractor to operate within Sandwell on a borough-wide basis.
- Allow the new contractor to operate in specific areas of the borough, for example in Smethwick which would enable E-scooters to be used for trips to and from Birmingham City centre.

As stated in para 4.50 above, there are currently no plans to re-introduce E-scooter hire anywhere in Sandwell and, as yet, TfWM has not approached the Council to discuss future operations.

- 5.2 It is possible that the new contractor could take a decision not to operate in certain areas of the West Midlands anyway based on forecast usage and income projections. This would be a purely commercial decision.

6 Implications

Resources:	<p>There were no capital or revenue costs associated with the trial for SMBC, as the operator covered all costs. Some officer time for the development and management of the trial was required.</p> <p>In recognition that highway defects pose a greater risk for riders of E-scooters, the Council's Highway Asset Management Plan was modified such that any safety inspection conducted within the E-scooter trial area would adopt the cycleway intervention criteria (typically a 20mm defect) rather than the normal carriageway intervention criteria typically 40mm).</p> <p>Around £90,000 has been spent on repairs to potholes, surface patching etc, within the trial area but a proportion of this expenditure would have been incurred regardless.</p>
Legal and Governance:	<p>The West Midlands E-scooter trial scheme received formal approval at the West Midlands Combined Authority Board on the 5th June 2020. This removed the</p>



formal requirement for full cabinet approval at a local authority level. However, on the advice of Democratic Services colleagues, it was decided that approval for the trial should be treated as a key decision and as such require formal cabinet approval. This approval was received in November 2020.

The DfT passed 'Electric Scooter Trials and Traffic Signs (Coronavirus) Regulations and General Directions 2020' as secondary legislation to allow the trials to go ahead. E-scooters will continue to fall within the statutory definition of a motor vehicle. This is despite the DfT previously advising local authorities that E-scooters would (and should) be treated as similarly as E-bikes as possible.

Because of this statutory definition as a motor vehicle, E-scooters are not able to use footways or cycling infrastructure legally as part of a trial. The DfT amended the 2016 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) to permit use of mandatory cycle 'lanes' by E-scooters. However, the department did not have time to amend the 1988 Road Traffic Act (as this was primary legislation). This meant that cycle 'tracks' (governed under the 1988 primary legislation) were still not legally able to be used by E-scooters.

To get around this, the DfT proposed converting off-carriageway cycle tracks into cycle lanes. This would involve converting off carriageway cycling infrastructure into highway, and then deploying Traffic Regulation Orders to prohibit all vehicle use of this new carriageway apart from E-scooters. Internal legal advice highlighted the significant litigation risk associated with such a procedure. Feedback from highways officers also highlighted that this would be an



	impractical and resource intensive procedure, which would require significant amounts of new infrastructure to make effective. It was decided to exclude off carriageway cycling infrastructure from the scheme.
Risk:	Any hire scheme operator holds third-party liability and personal accident motor fleet insurance, satisfying the requirements outlined in the 1988 Road Traffic Act. This includes public and product liability insurances up to £20 million for each and every claim with a maximum excess of £100,000. This policy specifically indemnifies WMCA and Highway Authorities (including SMBC) where there are third party claims arising from the operator's failure to comply with the requirements of the contract in providing services. This insurance policy would not, however, cover third party claims against SMBC arising from the management or maintenance of its roads.
Equality:	<p>Concerns have been raised about the use of E-scooters by several Visually Impaired groups. These concerns centre around two key issues, firstly the risk of collision between pedestrians and riders if scooters are being ridden on the pavement, and secondly the risk of parked scooters blocking the footway. These issues adversely impact all pedestrians but are particularly problematic for visually impaired, less mobile and disabled groups. These risks were mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rigorous enforcement of the parking and riding rules outlined in section 6 of the operational play book. These rules prohibited pavement riding and inconsiderate parking. • Limiting the number of scooters to a manageable level to reduce the incidence of poor pavement parking.



	A full equality impact assessment was carried out by West Midlands Combined Authority for the West Midlands Trial Scheme.
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Part of the justification for carrying out the trials nationally was to establish if E-scooter use would impact adversely on active modes. This is dealt with in the DfT Evaluation report.</p> <p>E-Scooters do not produce any air pollution. The DfT evaluation concluded that E -scooters can, in the right circumstances, provide a genuine alternative to car use and thus contribute to improvements in air quality and reductions to carbon footprints.</p> <p>Reducing car trips is a priority for Sandwell as the whole borough was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005. Sandwell MBC has had an Air Quality Action Plan (2005) for a number of years which has a range of measures to improve air quality in the borough including “implementing a range of measures to promote alternative and sustainable travel”. Despite progress with the council’s Air Quality Action Plan, measured NOx concentrations in the borough are not declining as expected.</p>
Social Value	There are no direct social value implications arising from this report.

7. Appendices

- A. What Constitutes an E-scooter?
- B. West Bromwich Trial Zone Map
- C. Operational Playbook



Appendix A - What Constitutes an E-scooter?

An E-scooter has been defined by the Department for Transport as a vehicle which;

- is fitted with no motor other than an electric motor with a maximum continuous power rating of 500W and is not fitted with pedals that are capable of propelling the vehicle;
- is designed to carry no more than one person;
- has a maximum speed not exceeding 15.5 mph;
- has 2 wheels, 1 front and 1 rear, aligned along the direction of travel;
- has a mass including the battery, but excluding the rider, not exceeding 55kg;
- has means of directional control via the use of handlebars that are mechanically linked to the steered wheel;
- has means of controlling the speed via hand controls and a power control that defaults to the 'off' position

Voi's model of scooter used in the West Midlands trials was assessed as part of the procurement process and judged to meet the DfT's standards outlined above. It includes a GPS tracking device which records where the E-scooter is. If a scooter leaves the trial zone or enters a 'no ride zone' as reported by GPS, the engine will cut out.



This page is intentionally left blank

Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

30th September 2021



Subject:	West Bromwich E-Scooter Trial
Director:	Director, Spatial Planning and Growth Director name
Contact Officer:	Strategic Planning and Transport Manager – Andy Miller – Andy_Miller@sandwell.gov.uk Transport Planning Officer – Oliver Ford – Oliver_Ford@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the proposed running of the E-Scooter Trial up to March 2022.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>People live well and age well</p> <p>E-scooters may encourage modal shift away private car use for short trips, reducing air pollution and decreasing the associated risks of lung and heart damage.</p>
	<p>A strong and inclusive economy</p> <p>E-scooters offer increased accessibility into West Bromwich town centre strengthening its role as a social, retail, educational and employment centre.</p>





A connected and accessible Sandwell

Provision of E-scooters may encourage modal shift from car use for short trips, improving air quality and reducing emissions

The current trial zone provides links from West Bromwich retail core and Dartmouth Park to West Midlands Metro stations and West Bromwich Bus Station.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Scooters are one of the new forms of transport emerging as technology, cost effective manufacturing and batteries improve. As with electric bikes, they are starting to be used (illegally in the UK) by private owners. They are also being used in various cities across the world as part of public sharing and hire schemes.

In an urban context they can help with providing easy first and last mile access to destinations. However, as with any emerging technology there are concerns about unintended consequences, particularly the safety of riders and other road users such as pedestrians.

In a wider initiative to promote walking and cycling as part of a green and healthy recovery from COVID 19 the Secretary of State for Transport announced the acceleration of twelve-month E-Scooter trials planned for 2021. The objectives of the trials include:

- Providing faster access to more places;
- Accelerating the ability of the transport system to return to normal;
- Off-setting the potential for a mass reversion to car use in urban areas;
- Supporting a healthy and green re-start post COVID;
- Providing learning:-
 - Improving the evidence base, which globally is inconclusive
 - Understanding if eScooters could be made safer if they are not safe enough;
 - Informing future legislation and/or regulation (particularly important following the transport select committee's recent recommendation to legalise E-scooters in the UK)
 - Better understanding pricing models.



Following a full procurement process led by TfWM in conjunction with Birmingham City Council (as lead authority). Swedish micro-mobility firm Voi were nominated as the sole operator for trials being held in the West Midlands. Founded in 2018, and with approximately 500 employees, Voi currently operate forty-five micro-mobility schemes across Europe in cities such as Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Berlin and Hamburg. They have also been appointed to run trials in Northamptonshire, Bristol, Cambridge and Liverpool. Voi have appointed a dedicated West Midlands operational manager, as well as fleet, charging and maintenance teams across the region to support the trial.

Sandwell's trial has formed part of a regionally coordinated programme of E-Scooter trials for the West Midlands. These have been managed in a close partnership between Local Highway Authorities, TfWM and the chosen operator Voi. Local Highway Authorities have lead on the zone identification, whilst Voi have been responsible the operation of the trial itself whilst TfWM have supported through coordination, resourcing and facilitation.

West Bromwich was originally chosen as the location for the trial based on its high footfall (as the primary retail and commercial centre in the borough); low speed roads (due to West Bromwich's 20mph zone); transport links (in particular West Midlands Metro and West Bromwich Bus Station); day time population (estimated pre-Covid at approximately 13,600) and size (just over one square mile). However, the limited size of the original trial area has limited the potential of the trial to drive modal shift away from private car use.

Trial Length: The trial license granted by DfT expires 31st March 2022.

What Constitutes an E-Scooter: Within its guidance for the trials, the DfT has stated that E-scooters will continue to fall within the statutory definition of a motor vehicle. Specifically, an e-scooter has been defined by the department as a vehicle which:

- is fitted with no motor other than an electric motor with a maximum continuous power rating of 500W and is not fitted with pedals that are capable of propelling the vehicle
- is designed to carry no more than one person
- has a maximum speed not exceeding 15.5 mph



- has 2 wheels, 1 front and 1 rear, aligned along the direction of travel
- has a mass including the battery, but excluding the rider, not exceeding 55kg
- has means of directional control via the use of handlebars that are mechanically linked to the steered wheel
- has means of controlling the speed via hand controls and a power control that defaults to the 'off' position

Voi's model of scooter to be used in the trials was assessed as part of the procurement process and judged to meet the DfT's standards outlined above.

Voi's model of scooter includes a GPS tracking device which records where the E-Scooter is. If a scooter leaves the trial zone or enters a 'no ride zone' as reported by GPS, the engine will cut out.

Where and when can E-Scooters be used and by whom: E-scooters can only be used within the defined trial zone and if they are hired from the operator (Voi). E-Scooter use outside the trial zone remains illegal, as does private e-scooter use within the trial zone. E-scooter users must follow the rules set out in the operational play book and will be restricted to riding on the carriageway and Metro Parkway within the trial zone from 06:00 to 22:00.

To hire an E-Scooter, users must be eighteen or over and hold a driving license (provisional licenses are acceptable).

E-Scooters are barred from entering the following areas within the existing trial zone. These areas are specified as 'no ride zones':

- The pedestrianised section of West Bromwich High Street to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- Garden of Remembrance to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- New Square to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- Oak House Park to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- Metro Plaza,
- Private Land, including but not limited to:
 - Sandwell College (including the section of the metro plaza it owns)
 - Astle Retail Park
 - West Bromwich Bus Station



- Kings Square Shopping Centre
- Queens Square Shopping Centre
- Metro Station walkways and platforms: Black Lake; Dudley Street Guns Village; Dartmouth Street; Lodge Road; West Bromwich Central; Trinity Way; Kenrick Park; The Hawthorns.

Fleet Size and Distribution: 50 Voi scooters are operational in West Bromwich town centre. They redistributed throughout the day by Voi employees.

Speed: It is proposed that E-Scooters being used in the trial have a maximum speed limit of 12.5mph, in line with the current speed limit in Birmingham. This is an increase in speed from the initial 10mph originally in place in West Bromwich. This increase would bring West Bromwich in line with regional and national norms, with scooters reaching speeds broadly in line with cycles. This speed offers a balance between convenience and speed for the user and reassurance for pedestrians. Despite having a national maximum of 15.5mph, it is at each authority's discretion what the scooters speed limit should be in each trial.

Helmets: In accordance with DfT guidance the wearing of helmets will be advised but not mandatory for users. The operator will provide helmets for all users who wish to use one.

Parking: Scooter parking will continue to be 'dockless'. Apart from defined 'no park zones', users will be able to leave their scooters wherever their trip ends as long as it follows parking standards (parked on footway, upright and not blocking pedestrian movements). Users must submit a photo of their parked scooter via the Voi app before finishing the ride. Only when their parked scooters is approved as appropriately parked does the user's ride end.

Parking docks or incentivised parking zones (IPZs) may be installed by Voi based on where trips naturally begin and end within the extended the trial zone. Installation of these docks or IPZs will follow the usual process of installation of infrastructure on the highway, including assessment of suitability. All 'no ride zones' are also designated 'no park zones'.



User Interface, Ticketing, Communications: Users book and pay for the E-Scooters using Voi's smartphone app. Users will pay a basic rate of 20p per minute, or £12 per hour. The app will communicate to users' expectations and offer training around safe riding and parking as well as alerting users when they are about to leave the trial zone or enter a 'no ride zone'.

The Trial to Date: Since the trial began in December 2020, the West Bromwich trial zone has seen:

- 85,591km travelled.
- 1,614 total users.
- 0.7 average rides per vehicle per day.
- 0 Serious injuries (self reported, broken bones etc.).
- 4 slight injuries (self reported, falling off scooter, bruises, cuts).
- Average of 5 reports of pavement riding per week.

5 Implications

Resources:	There are no capital or revenue costs associated with the trial for SMBC going forward. Officer time for the development and management of the trial has been required.
Legal and Governance:	<p>The West Midlands E-scooter trial scheme received formal approval at the West Midlands Combined Authority Board on the 5th June 2020. This removed the formal requirement for full cabinet approval at a local authority level. However, on the advice of Democratic Services colleagues, it was decided that approval for the trial should be treated as a key decision and as such require formal cabinet approval. This approval was received in November 2020.</p> <p>The DfT passed 'Electric Scooter Trials and Traffic Signs (Coronavirus) Regulations and General Directions 2020' as secondary legislation to allow the trials to go ahead</p>
Risk:	The operator Voi holds third-party liability and personal accident motor fleet insurance, satisfying the



	<p>requirements outlined in the 1988 Road Traffic Act. This includes public and product liability insurances up to £20 million for each and every claim with a maximum excess of £100,000. This policy specifically indemnifies WMCA and Highway Authorities (including SMBC) where there are third party claims arising from the operator's failure to comply with the requirements of the contract in providing services.</p>
Equality:	<p>Concerns have been raised about the use of E-Scooters by several Visually Impaired groups. These concerns centre around two key issues, firstly the risk of collision between pedestrians and riders if scooters are being ridden on the pavement, and secondly the risk of parked scooters blocking the footway. These issues adversely impact all pedestrians but are particularly problematic for visually impaired, less mobile and disabled groups. These risks have been and will continue to be mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The enforcement of the parking and riding rules. These rules expressly prohibit pavement riding and inconsiderate parking. • Limiting the number of scooters to a manageable level which will reduce the incidence of poor pavement parking. <p>Sandwell Visually Impaired have been consulted before and during the trial and have raised no fundamental issues with the trial.</p> <p>The proposed tariff of 20p per minute (£12 per hour) will prove a barrier to use by individuals from low income households. This is particularly pertinent to the West Bromwich trial with approximately 22% of residents in the town living in an income deprived household, compared to 15% of people nationally. This can be mitigated by Voi's 'Voi-4-All' scheme which offers an unlimited £10 monthly pass for low income individuals. As the trial expands into residential areas to the north of the town centre, officers will continue to work with Voi to ensure that this offer is available to all who qualify.</p>



	<p>The requirement for users to be able to access a smart phone to hire the scooters will prove a barrier to the elderly and low-income individuals who are less likely to have access to internet accessible devices. There is currently no proposed mitigation to this barrier as Voi's business plan is predicated on the hiring platform being hosted by a smartphone app.</p> <p>The requirement for users to hold a driving license will also act as a barrier to low income and BAME individuals, who less likely to hold a driving license. There is no proposed mitigation to this barrier as holding a driving license is seen as a key safety measure by Voi.</p> <p>E-Scooters may have a positive impact on those with moderate to mild mobility issues, as the scooters remove the need to walk long distances.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	<p>Whilst there is currently little conclusive evidence either way, the concern has been raised that E-Scooter use may displace walking and cycling or public transport use. One study on the use of E-scooters in Raleigh, North Carolina found that out of a sample of E-Scooter users, 50% said that if they had not used an E-Scooter they would have walked or cycled. This would have a damaging impact on resident's health, an issue in Sandwell given that in 2012 24.5% of Year 6 children and 25.4% of adults in Sandwell were classified as obese. Given that the impact of E-scooter on cycling and walking are currently little understood, there is no mitigation that can currently be proposed for this.</p> <p>Similarly, the concern that E-Scooters may be displace public transport use has also been raised, although there is little evidence for this. The aforementioned study of E-Scooter users in Raleigh found that only 11% would have used the bus instead of an E-Scooter.</p>



	<p>E-Scooters do not produce any air pollution. The trial could provide an alternative to the private car for short trips and contribute to an improvement in air quality. Voi conducted a national in-app survey conducted between March and April 2021 which indicated that 27.5% of Voi E-scooters trips replace cars. Reducing car trips is a priority for Sandwell as the whole borough was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005. Sandwell MBC has had an Air Quality Action Plan (2005) for a number of years which has a range of measures to improve air quality in the borough including “implementing a range of measures to promote alternative and sustainable travel”. Despite progress with the council’s Air Quality Action Plan, measured NOx concentrations in the borough are not declining as expected.</p>
Social Value	<p>The increased accessibility into to West Bromwich town centre offered by E-Scooters may contribute to the area’s recovery from the COVID-19 lockdown. The extension of the trial will offer increased accessibility to services with West Bromwich town centre for communities now within the trial zone.</p>

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Trial Zone Map



This page is intentionally left blank

Operational Playbook

1 Document Revisions

- 1.1 The playbook outlines the headline rules that providers will need to adhere to from the outset of the trial. However, it will remain a working document throughout the trial period, so additions and changes can be made and agreed to adapt to trial findings and needs in the different zones.
- 1.2 Updates to this document will be managed through the Governance process at either the zonal or regional monthly board meetings. Updates must achieve the backing of the constituent trial stakeholders with updates disseminated to all relevant parties.

2 Users

Elements governing the users is covered in the Deployment Specification (Annex – 1A)

3 e-scooters

Elements governing the e-scooter vehicles is covered in the Deployment Specification (Annex – 1A)

4 Fleet size

- 4.1 Phased rollout and scaling must conform to the requirements detailed in the Deployment Specification but specifics that require detailing in the Operational Zonal Playbook include:

4.2 Initial, minimum and maximum fleet sizes

- 4.2.1 The Operator's maximum number of allowed e-scooters shall be 50

4.3 Fleet launch or deployment schedule

- 4.3.1 The Operator will launch
 - (a) 25/50 scooters on Week 1 of the trial;
 - (b) 30/50 scooters on Week 2 of the trial
 - (c) 35/50 scooters on Week 3 of the trial;
 - (d) 40/50 scooters on Week 4 of the trial;
 - (e) 45/50 scooters on Week 5 of the trial

- (f) 50/50 scooters on Week 6 of the trial

4.4 **Dynamic fleet capping and minimum utilisation rates**

- 4.4.1 After launch, Operators may increase their initial fleet size requirement through relevant governance procedures by reference to the utilisation rates per e-scooter, which will be the guiding rationale for fleet expansion (as per 4.5 of the Deployment Specification).

4.5 **Rebalancing and redistribution**

- 4.5.1 As set out in 4.6 of the Deployment Specification, Operator's will be expected to 'rebalance' e-scooters throughout the period of allowed operations (see 7.2.1).

4.6 **The trial zone**

- 4.6.1 The extent of the trial zone is outlined in Appendix B. This area will be geofenced to prohibit the use of e-scooters outside of the zone.
- 4.6.2 Any new areas, not agreed as part of the initial plan will be assessed against criteria including (but not limited to):
 - (a) Market potential (inc. rates of use locally);
 - (b) Existing coverage;
 - (c) Rates of loss/vandalism/complaint or misuse in that area.

5 **Other road users and the public**

- 5.1.1 Communications will be facilitated through multiple channels as required to enable access and inclusion for all. Operators will provide an immediate response to any enquiry containing acknowledgement and explaining the context of the Trial and will provide a specific individual response to the enquiry within no more than one working week.

5.2 **Outreach and public education**

- 5.2.1 Providers are strongly encouraged to create and launch campaigns during all phases of the trial that address safe riding, safe and compliant parking, how to share cycle lanes/shared pavements and what to do in the event of an accident.
- 5.2.2 Providers are strongly encouraged to partner with local police, fire and other emergency services and the LHA's Road Safety/Safer and Sustainable Travel Teams to engage in local safety campaigns or community events.
- 5.2.3 Providers are strongly encouraged to develop tailored and specific education, engagement and outreach communications and activities for users that face significant economic, health, social or accessibility barriers to e-scooter riding (e.g.

how users can access scooters via cash payment options or without smartphone access).

5.3 Reporting accidents

- 5.3.1 Where an e-scooter user is involved in an accident with a pedestrian, animal or vehicle that results in personal injury or property damage, the operator shall report the accident to the LHA no later than 24 hours after the event, providing information concerning the accident as may be required.

6 Parking and operations

6.1 Parking requirements

- 6.1.1 Operators will require users to park e-scooters upright on hard surfaces at back of footway.

- 6.1.2 As well as being prohibited from parking in designated 'no ride zones'. User will also be prohibited from parking scooters in designated 'no park zones listed Section 6.6.

- 6.1.3 E-scooters must be parked in compliance with the guidelines as detailed in Section 6.2.2-6.2.5 of the Deployment Specification:

- *users shall not park e-scooters in such a manner as to block the pedestrian thoroughfare, any emergency facility or utility pole or box;*
- *users shall not park e-scooters in such a manner as to impede or interfere with the reasonable access to or from any building;*
- *users shall not park e-scooters in such a manner as to impede or interfere with the reasonable use of any bicycle rack; and*
- *users shall not park e-scooters in the landscape/furniture zone directly adjacent to or within the following areas, such that access is impeded:*
 - o *transit zones, including bus stops, shelters, passenger waiting areas, and bus layover and staging zones, except at existing bicycle racks; loading zones; disabled parking zone; street furniture that requires pedestrian access (for example - benches, parking pay stations, bus shelters, transit information signs, etc.); curb ramps; entryways and driveways.*

- 6.1.4 E-scooters parked in violation of these rules and regulations must be relocated within the timing guidelines set out in 6.3 of the Deployment Specification:

The Operator shall respond to reports of incorrectly parked e-scooters, or reports of unsafe/inoperable e-scooters by relocating, re-parking, or removing the e-scooters, as appropriate, within the timing guidelines below:

- a) *If reported between 6am-midnight: 2 hours*

b) *If reported between midnight- 6am: 4 hours*

Performance and geo-spatial statistics will be recorded by the Operator in a system accessible to the TfWM/LHA shared on incidents and response time.

6.1.5 In the event a reported e-scooter is not relocated, re-parked, or removed within the timeframe specified herein, or any e-scooter is parked in one location for more than 24 hours without being returned to a designated parking area, such e-scooters may be removed by local crews and taken to a local facility for storage.

6.1.6 Operators should consider offering some LA staff the option of 'admin unlock' so that they can remove and reposition e-scooters if needed.

6.1.7 Any temporary parking restrictions need to be defined and agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the event. These must be communicated to the e-scooter users in that area, 4 hours in advance and during the event via appropriate channels.

6.1.8 To ensure safe and compliant parking, Operators will be required to create and reinforce responsible parking through supporting actions including (but not limited to):

(a) Complying with 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.4 of the Deployment Specification:

- *riders must agree to rules about where to ride, how to ride and how to park at the first time of use with appropriately timed reminders. Operators are encouraged to use clear and creative messages to make rules memorable.*
- *operators are required to inform and train users about how to safely park e-scooters without obstructing other road users, especially people with disabilities. Operators are encouraged to specifically inform e-scooter users on the potentially negative impacts of e-scooters on people with disabilities and the importance of following parking (and riding) rules;*

(b) highlighting and showing all incentivised parking areas in their respective app/ platforms to allow users to easily find them;

(c) highlighting any No Parking areas in their respective app/platforms to allow users to easily avoid them;

(d) educating users how to park responsibly per trial requirements and boundary limits through appropriate means including in-app guidance and user flows;

(e) implementing a package of incentives for parking appropriately or reporting poorly parked e-scooters;

(f) implementing a package of disincentives (e.g. warnings, fines, account suspensions) for users not parking in designated parking areas;

- (g) responding to reports of incorrectly e-scooters as per the timing guidelines set out in 6.3 of the Deployment Specification;

- 6.1.9 The LHA reserves the right to adopt an approach to permit parking outside designated dockless parking areas. However, Operators will be required to leverage a service fee, directly payable by the user to allow the rapid retrieval of the e-scooter and relocation to a designated dockless parking area. Users must be warned prior to hiring of all liable charges, fines and consequences of not parking e-scooters in designated dockless parking areas.
- 6.1.10 The LHA reserves the right to determine and designate areas where parking is allowed and where parking is prohibited.

Usage guidance

- 6.1.11 Within each area the operators must agree with the Local Highway Authority specifically which areas e-scooters can be used. This must be in accordance with the Deployment Specification.
- 6.1.12 Any temporary riding restrictions need to be defined and agreed at least 2 weeks in advance of the event. These must be communicated to the e-scooter users in that area, 4 hours in advance and during the event via appropriate channels.

6.2 Operations within the trial area

- 6.2.1 E-scooters will operate only within the trial zone from 6am to 8pm. E-scooters shall not be available for rent outside of these operating hours.
- 6.2.2 An operator must retrieve any e-scooter located outside of the trial zone within 4 hours, and e-scooters shall be not available to rent until returned to the trial zone and the operators shall not make such e-scooters visible for rent to users.
- 6.2.3 E-scooters shall not be deployed or operated at any other time when, due unfavourable weather conditions, persons and e-scooters are not clearly discernible at a distance of 150 metres or less.

6.3 No Ride/No Parking Zones

- 6.3.1 As stated in the deployment specification (2.1.6) 'e-scooters are to be ridden only public roads of 30mph speed limits or lower and where available, in bike lanes and bike paths.' For the West Bromwich Trial Zone, this in effect means **that e-scooters can only be ridden on carriageway and on the Metro Parkway** within the specified trial zone.
- 6.3.2 No Ride and No Parking zones will be designated by the LHA and communicated to operators at the launch of the trial or at any time they are determined by the LHA. Operators will be responsible for marking these areas appropriately and clearly in their platforms as well as making sure users are educated on how to treat these areas.

- 6.3.3 E-scooters are not permitted to be used in Parks and are not permitted to enter or be parked on park land.

6.4 **Riding Permissions, Restrictions and Safety Information**

- 6.4.1 E-Scooter operating in the trial area will be limited to 10mph.

- 6.4.2 The riding of e-scooters is permissible only within the designated trial zone on carriageways and on the Metro Parkway. For the purposes of clarity, explicit 'No Ride Zones' (areas where e-scooters are prohibited) are outlined below:

- (a) **West Bromwich High Street** to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- (b) **Garden of Remembrance** to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- (c) **New Square** to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- (d) **Oak House Park** to avoid conflict with pedestrians
- (e) **Metro Plaza,**
- (f) Private Land, including but not limited to:
 - i **Sandwell College** (including the section of the metro plaza it owns)
 - ii **Astle Retail Park**
 - iii **West Bromwich Bus Station**
 - iv **Kings Square Shopping Centre**
 - v **Queens Square Shopping Centre**
- (g) **Metro Station walkways and platforms:** Black Lake; Dudley Street Guns Village; Dartmouth Street; Lodge Road; West Bromwich Central; Trinity Way; Kenrick Park; The Hawthorns.

- 6.4.3 All no ride zones outlined above are also designated no park zones

- 6.4.4 As well as the areas outlined in 6.6.2 the below are also designated 'no park zones'.

- (a) The Metro Parkway
- (b) Bromford Lane
- (c) Westbourne Road (after the junction with Caroline Street).
- (d) The southern side of Caroline Street
- (e) Margaret Street
- (f) Cambridge Street

- (g) Oak Road between Cambridge Street and Margaret Street
 - (h) Lodge Road up to Oxford Road/Izons Road
- 6.4.5 Where possible, it is expected that the 'No Ride Zones' outlined in 6.6.2 will be geofenced, with motors automatically being disabled when users enter these zones.
- 6.4.6 *Potentially hazardous junctions just outside of trial zone.* The lead up to these junctions needs to be carefully monitored by the operator and reported on to the LHA. Users need to be clearly alerted that they are approaching a dangerous junction outside of the trial zone.
- (a) The approach to Bromford Lane Roundabout. The roundabout has heavy traffic volume, an uneven gradient and is often used by Heavy Goods vehicles.
 - (b) The approach to All Saints Way/A41 Expressway Roundabout on Cronehills Link Way. This junction experiences high volumes of traffic at speed.
 - (c) The Approach to The Albion Roundabout (A41) on Carters green. This junction experiences high volumes of traffic at speed.
- 6.4.7 *Unfavourable Junctions and Stretches (use with caution).* The use of e-scooters in these areas needs to be carefully monitored by the operator and reported on to the LHA:
- (a) The Crossing from Claypit Lane to Millward St via Woods Lane is potentially hazardous and needs to be considered in relation to ongoing plans being proposed as part of cycling and walking infrastructure improvements;
 - (b) Bromford Lane, from Cambridge St to the trial boundary at the roundabout (this stretch has limited capacity with parked vehicles and regular bus services).
 - (c) West Bromwich Ringway up to and including Congregation Way Roundabout, including Bull Street, Walsall Street and Reform Street and associated junctions onto Overend Street, High Street and Spon Lane. Vehicle volume on this stretch can be high and at times exceed speed limits. The 'hard' traffic engineering focus of the street scene may also be intimidating to some users.
 - (d) West Bromwich Bus Station access/egress onto West Bromwich Ringway and St. Michael's street, including St. Moor St./Price St. Gyratory. This area experiences high volumes of bus traffic, narrow carriageway and occasionally limited site lines.
- 6.4.8 *Junctions that lead out of trial area.* Users need to be made aware that these junctions lead out of the trial area.

- (a) Johnstone Street onto Kelvin Way
- (b) Dawes Avenue onto Kelvin Way
- (c) Albion Road onto Brandon Way

7 Ticketing and payments integration

- 7.1.1 Elements governing the payments integration is covered in the Deployment Specification (Annex – 1A)

8 Equality aspects

- 8.1.1 Elements governing the equality aspects of e-scooters is covered in the Deployment Specification (Annex – 1A)
- 8.1.2 Where relevant and appropriate, LHAs reserve the right to define specific priority or opportunity areas within trial zones where high proportions of potential users face barriers to access or are historically underserved by other transport options. LHAs may define specific scooter deployment and balancing requirements in these areas.
- 8.1.3 Providers are strongly encouraged to develop their workforces by employing locally and developing relationships with local/national workforce training initiatives or employment programmes.
- 8.1.4 Providers are strongly to engage with relevant community-based organisations, cultural organisations or non-profits found within the local area and trial zone.

9 Vandalism and Theft

- 9.1.1 The operator is to prescribe the anti-theft and anti-vandalism measures available and intended for deployment in each area.
- 9.1.2 In the event of repeated incidents the LHA, enforcement authorities and suppliers will be called to review and implement solutions to mitigate anti-social behaviour against vehicles.

10 Testing and Assurance

- 10.1.1 Prior to launch, the operator will have to test and demonstrate to the LHA effectiveness of all hardware and geofencing capabilities.
- 10.1.2 Prior to launch, the operator will have to outline its commitment to employing trial ambassadors within the trial zone.

Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

9 March 2023

Subject:	West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan and related matters
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Andy Miller – Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations




- 1.1 That the Board notes the content and implications of the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board requested an update on the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan and supporting measures.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Strong resilient communities: Successful communities need access to jobs, services and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. The public transport network, of which bus services are the major part, is an important enabler of this.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods: Both new and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services and leisure facilities in order for them to be successful. The public transport network, of which bus services are the major part, is an important enabler of this.
	<p>A connected and accessible Sandwell: The provision of a high quality public transport network will enable Sandwell residents to access jobs, education and services both within and beyond the Borough's boundaries.</p> <p>Bus services are a key component of the public transport network. The Bus Service Improvement plan backed by the enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme will underpin the provision of a comprehensive and integrated bus network throughout Sandwell.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

The state of the bus network in the West Midlands

- 4.1 Four out of five of all public transport trips in the West Midlands are made by bus. The West Midlands network is the largest outside of London with over 248 million passenger boardings in 2019/20. There are over 300 routes served by 2,000 buses. Twenty-four operators provide these routes but the largest, with 89% of all scheduled mileage, is National Express West Midlands. Diamond Bus (Rotala) is the next largest within the WMCA area whilst many cross-boundary services are operated by the other major national operators, Arriva, Stagecoach and First.



- 4.2 However, bus patronage has been falling steadily since the 1980s. Services which are not commercially viable but are socially necessary are subsidised through a tender process. There are currently 159 such contracts covering 219 routes. The cost of these subsidies has risen consistently for a number of years and in 2020/21 amounted to £9.8m. This funding comes from the transport levy that each of the seven West Midlands local authorities pays to fund TfWM. The levy also funds the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme which provides free travel for qualifying groups.
- 4.3 The steady decline in bus usage was exacerbated by the Covid19 pandemic. Patronage is currently at around 82% of pre-Covid levels and the network has required significant public subsidy to remain viable. DfT funding remains in place until the end of March which has enabled a network equivalent to 90% of the pre-Covid network to be maintained. However, operators have recently made it known that a further 10% of the network is at risk without further support.
- 4.4 It is against this backdrop that the various strategies, both national and regional, have been adopted to support the bus network. This report covers the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Enhanced Partnership and infrastructure proposals being developed to support it. It also gives an update on the Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) network review.
- 4.5 In March 2021, The Department for Transport published a new national strategy for bus services in England ('Bus Back Better') in an attempt to reform bus service provision across the country. The strategy set out an ambition for every local transport authority (LTA) and bus operator in England to be in a statutory enhanced partnership (EP) or franchising arrangement by April 2022, using existing powers within the Bus Services Act 2017.
- 4.6 In response to this, TfWM, in partnership with its constituent authorities, developed the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) published in November 2021.



Bus Service Improvement Plan

- 4.7 The BSIP complements the existing Strategic Vision for Bus (see Appendix A). This set out four key objectives for bus service improvement in the metropolitan area:
- a) A more sustainable and attractive service offer
 - b) A consistent, good delivery of the service offer
 - c) Ensuring a good passenger experience for all
 - d) Reducing environmental impacts

The BSIP document is contained at Appendix B.

- 4.8 The central plank of the objective to deliver consistently good service delivery is a core network of ‘turn up and go’ services with enhanced frequencies which is easy for passengers to understand and navigate. This core network will then be fed by a network of local and supporting services.
- 4.9 The aim is for service frequencies on the core network to meet the following standards;

Monday to Saturday

- 12 to 15 mins between 0500 to 0700
- 8 to 10 mins between 0700 and 1830
- 12 to 15 mins between 1830 and 2330

Sunday

- 15 mins 0630 to 0830
- 10 to 12 mins 0830 to 1700
- 15 mins 1700 to 2200

- 4.10 The core network will be supported with comprehensive bus priority measures, improved waiting facilities, branding, information and integrated ticketing. It is envisaged this investment coupled with the stated frequency levels will give this core network the best chance to be commercially viable in the medium term.



4.11 The Core Bus Network includes the following corridors in Sandwell;

- Birmingham to Walsall via Great Barr (Route 51 and SPRINT)
- Birmingham to Hamstead (Route 16)
- Birmingham to Dudley via West Bromwich (Route 74)
- Birmingham to Dudley via Smethwick & Oldbury (Route 87)
- Birmingham to Dudley via Bearwood (Route
- Birmingham to Dudley via Bearwood and Blackheath (Route x)
- Birmingham to Stourbridge via Bearwood (Route 9)
- Birmingham Outer Circle (through Bearwood) (Route 11)
- Sutton Coldfield to West Bromwich (Route 5)
- Walsall to Hayley Green/Merry Hill via West Bromwich, Oldbury and Blackheath (Route 4)
- West Bromwich to Wolverhampton via Wednesbury (Route 79)
- Walsall to Merry hill via Wednesbury, Tipton and Dudley (Route x)

The Core Bus Network is shown at page 33 of the BSIP. Many of these corridors are intended to be joined to other corridors that feed into Birmingham city centre to form ‘cross-city’ routes. This will enable a greater range of single journey options throughout the conurbation.

4.12 The first of these cross-city routes, the Birmingham to Dudley via Oldbury corridor joined to the Birmingham to Druids Heath corridor, is already seeing investment in bus priority measures funded through a £24.2m grant from the DfT’s “A Better deal for Bus users” funding. This will include some works with Sandwell at Burnt Tree and in Oldbury.

4.13 The BSIP proposes a 200% increase in the length of bus priority lanes in the West Midlands. 106km of new bus lanes are proposed by 2025 of which the following identified routes run through Sandwell;

- Birmingham to Dudley via West Bromwich (currently Route 74)
- Birmingham to Dudley via Smethwick and Oldbury (currently route 87)
- Birmingham to Halesowen (currently Route 9)
- Birmingham Outer Circle (Route 11)



The remaining Sandwell corridors would be in the post 2025 programme.

- 4.14 Much of Sandwell's highway network is single-carriageway and thus unsuitable for bus lanes. Nonetheless, the overall increase in bus priority on these routes will benefit Sandwell residents who use them.
- 4.15 The BSIP is not, however, solely about physical infrastructure to support buses. A key deliverable within the BSIP is for an extensive ticket incentivisation programme, intended to provide free or reduced priced travel for a wide range of groups in order to promote bus use, grow patronage and reduce reliance on cars.
- 4.16 Bus ticketing is currently complex, and each operator has their own suite of tickets. The multi-operator 'nBus' ticket enables passengers to use all operators' services in the region but has an associated price-premium, so usage is limited. The complexity of ticketing can lead to difficulties in promoting clear, consistent messaging about bus fares to users and this acts as a barrier to use, particularly for those not currently familiar with bus use which the incentivisation schemes will primarily be aimed at.
- 4.17 In order to address this, the BSIP commits to the removal of the price-premium on the multi-operator nBus ticket, such that the price will be reduced to mirror that of single-operator tickets. As a result, this is likely to result in the removal of many operators' individual ticket products and simplify ticketing across the region significantly. Effectively nBus will replace the majority of operators' own day tickets and season tickets and allow for much clearer messaging. It is proposed to implement this in during 2023.
- 4.18 The BSIP includes further commitments around improved real-time information at stops, stop infrastructure and improvements to bus stations. There is also a major drive to modernise and decarbonise the bus fleet through the introduction of electric and hydrogen powered buses, and the retro-fitting of diesel buses to Euro VI standard. The overall aim is for the bus fleet to be carbon-neutral by 2041.



- 4.19 Finally, the BSIP includes details of how the Safer Travel Plan will operate to reduce the levels of crime on the network and improve both the reality and perceptions of public safety on buses. This work is being done in partnership with operators, West Midlands Police and British Transport Police. Further detail is contained at page 19 of the BSIP document.
- 4.20 All BSIPs were assessed by the DfT. In February 2022 TfWM advised that it was one of 31 Authorities who's plans would be funded by Government, with £87.858m of revenue funding secured to support delivery. This funding was confirmed in August 2022 and TfWM advised this would be phased over three years between April 2022 and March 2025. The allocations will be dependent upon TfWM demonstrating to the DfT that it has made effective progress in delivery against BSIP commitments.

Enhanced Partnership

- 4.21 The West Midlands Enhanced Partnership (EP) was made in June 2021 to enable formal partnership working arrangements between bus operators, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the seven West Midlands councils that act as Local Highway Authorities.
- 4.22 The EP consists of a strategic document which sets out a clear vision of improvements that are envisaged to bus services known as an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan). The EP Plan includes a commitment to such things as;
- Transition to a low emission bus fleet,
 - Simpler payment methods,
 - Faster journeys,
 - Safer services,
 - Better passenger information and concessions tailored to excluded groups.
- 4.1 The EP Plan must be accompanied by one or more Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EP Schemes) which set out the actions and commitments to achieve the improvements in the EP Plan. An EP places a legal duty on



all signatories of the EP including the local authorities to deliver against the actions and commitments made in an EP Scheme.

- 4.23 The EP is used to deliver on the themes and objectives set out in the Strategic Vision for Bus and BSIP. The EP Plan covers the entire West Midlands metropolitan area, setting out an overarching strategic roadmap for bus service improvement across the urban area. To complement this, an associated, more detailed, EP Scheme was developed covering the cross-city A34(N)/A45/B425 'SPRINT' corridor. The initial EP scheme was therefore geographically limited to this corridor and to highways that are the responsibility of Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall councils.
- 4.24 Sandwell's Cabinet approved the EP Plan and Scheme in February 2021. To meet the objectives set out in the BSIP, a variation was made to the EP Scheme in November 2022 so that it covers the same geography as the EP Plan, i.e. the whole of the West Midlands Combined Authority area. This allows for more detailed planning and specified actions across the urban area to deliver improvements to bus services as outlined in the EP Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 4.25 A further variation is being prepared which will reduce the number of ticket options chargeable by bus operators, creating a simpler fare structure for bus users. Additionally, this variation will also introduce maximum service frequencies on certain routes to ensure that bus operators do not overprovide on the most profitable corridors but spread their services to meet passenger demand.
- 4.26 The current version of the EP Plan and Scheme are contained at Appendix C.

Bus Network Review

- 4.27 As previously stated, local bus services are suffering from reduced passengers and revenues, significantly increasing costs and driver shortages. A number of bus services are no longer viable to operate without public sector support. This leads to a significant increase in the



costs of providing the subsidised network. Taken collectively TfWM reports a £6m budget pressure to maintain a network equivalent to 90% of mileage operated prior to the pandemic.

- 4.28 To address this, and in response to a DfT requirement, an operator-led Network Review was carried out during Autumn 2022. The key outcome of the review was for operators to implement a network they believe is sustainable in the longer term and for TfWM to then assess the implications of those commercial changes and seek to mitigate the impact as far as possible within the policy framework and budget available to the Authority.
- 4.29 Following the review of the commercial networks and the impact on the subsidised services, TfWM identified 39 services that were potentially ‘at risk’ against the access standards policy framework and the forecast outcome of the competitive tendering exercise.
- 4.30 The review results in changes to a number of services and the withdrawal of some. Details are contained in the report to TfWM’s Transport Delivery Committee contained at Appendix D. Of the withdrawn services, only one, route 22 (Tipton to Wednesbury) is in Sandwell.
- 4.31 Subsequent to this report further commercial services have been proposed for withdrawal by operators including route 45 by Diamond Bus.

Infrastructure improvements to support bus

- 4.32 New or improved transport infrastructure in the West Midlands, except for projects costing in £50m or more, is now predominantly funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). CRSTS draws under one heading a number of transport former funding streams including Transforming Cities Fund (TCF), the Integrated Transport Block (ITB), and Highways Maintenance Block (HMB).
- 4.33 Government announced allocations to Local Authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities in April 2022. This confirmed the previously



announced provisional allocation of £1.05bn for the WMCA area. Decision making on the projects included in the submitted programmes is devolved to WMCA, with the exception of a small number of projects (none in Sandwell) in which DfT wishes to retain a role. In confirming this allocation, DfT indicated that LTAs in receipt of CRSTS funding would not receive any additional capital funding to support their BSIPs. Therefore, CRSTS is, for the time being, the only other source of funding for infrastructure to support bus beyond the £24m of Better Deal For Bus Users funding being used to implement the cross-city route between Druids Heath and Dudley.

4.34 The West Midlands CRSTS programme for 2022-27 includes the following projects in Sandwell;

- A34/A45 SPRINT Corridor (Phase 2) (£56.60m) – Completion of the SPRINT route including a small amount of further bus priority in Sandwell around M6 Junction 7.
- A4123 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor (£29.00m) – A package of measures to provide segregated cycle lanes and bus priority measures between Wolverhampton and Hagley Road.
- A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor, Sandwell (£12.00m) - A package of measures to provide segregated cycle lanes and bus priority measures between Burnt Tree and Great Bridge.
- Dudley Port Integrated Transport Hub (Phase 1) (£2.40m) – First phase of improvements at Dudley Port station to provide interchange between bus, rail and metro.
- Smethwick to Birmingham Inclusive Growth Corridor Transport Package (£19.00m) - A package of measures to provide segregated cycle lanes and bus priority measures to support the regeneration of the area around the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital.

Franchising

4.35 As stated in paragraph 4.5 above, the national strategy for bus services in England, 'Bus Back Better', sets out an ambition for every LTA and bus operator in England to be in either an EP or franchising arrangement by April 2022.



4.36 Whilst at present the West Midlands has chosen to follow the enhanced partnership route, TfWM is investigating the strategic benefits and potential business case for franchising in order that the full range of options remains on the table for future consideration.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The report is for information and comment. Therefore, there are no alternative options for consideration.

6 Implications

Resources:	There are no resource implications arising from this report. The report contains details of the resources allocated to supporting bus services and the provision of infrastructure.
Legal and Governance:	The Transport Act 2000 and the Bus Services Act 2017 confer a range of powers on Local Transport Authorities in relation to bus services/ In the West Midlands metropolitan area the functions of the LTA rest with the West Midlands Combined Authority.
Risk:	As this report is for information and comments, there are no risks associated with its recommendations.
Equality:	There are no direct Equality implications resulting from the course of action recommended in this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no direct Health and Wellbeing implications resulting from the course of action recommended in this report.
Social Value	There are no direct Social Value implications resulting from the course of action recommended in this report.
Implications for Climate change	Decarbonisation of the transport system is central to the government's aims and objectives. It is also a principle theme within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. The provision of a high-quality bus network, operated by low/zero emission buses is a major element of the move to reduce car dependency, improve air quality and a move towards net zero carbon.



7. Appendices

- A. West Midlands Strategic Vision for Bus (2020)
- B. West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (2021)
- C. Enhanced Partnership Plan (2020) and Scheme (2022)
- D. Report to West Midlands Transport Delivery Committee 09:01:23

8. Background Papers

Report to West Midlands Combined Authority Board 10:06:22

Report to Cabinet 16:11:22



Strategic Vision for Bus

Page 67



Transport for
West Midlands

Contents

Foreword	p3
Executive summary	p4
Introduction	p5-8
The importance of bus in the West Midlands	p9-10
Challenges to bus	p11-13
Our bus intervention to date	p14-16
Opportunities presented by the bus	p17-19
Vision for bus	p20-22
Making the vision happen	p23





Andy Street

Mayor of the West Midlands



Roger Lawrence

Leader - City of Wolverhampton Council
Portfolio Holder - Transport WMCA

The West Midlands Combined Authority is working to deliver a transport system that the region will be proud of. One which allows people to prosper by connecting our communities to opportunities in employment, education, housing and leisure.

Public transport is essential for inclusive growth in the region, and the bus is central to the public transport offering with 4 out of 5 public transport journeys taken by bus. Through the West Midlands Bus Alliance we have worked collaboratively with bus operators, local authorities and other partners to invest in improvements to the West Midlands bus network, improving fares, passenger experience, vehicle emissions and network performance.

However the bus network is facing serious challenges. Congestion is decreasing the reliability and accessibility of the bus, whilst negative perceptions act as a barrier to a greater uptake in bus usage.

As a Mayoral Combined Authority we have new powers that could greatly influence the future of the network. Furthermore, technological innovations provide the potential to deliver a smarter network with integration between other modes of travel. We have the opportunity to deliver a bus network in the region that works for everyone, and decreases the need for private car trips which in turn helps to improve air quality in the region. These factors are key to achieving our Inclusive Growth agenda.

Setting our vision for the bus is necessary to enable us to assess the options and opportunities presented to us now and in the future. The vision will set the benchmark for what we want from the bus in the West Midlands, which will form a vital part of our world-class integrated transport system.

The West Midlands has strong growth ambitions to improve productivity and the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the region. The opening of HS2, 2021 Coventry City of Culture and the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will be once in a lifetime opportunities to transform the region and drive investment.

Transport is key to this economic growth, but congestion on our roads remains a challenge to our ambitions. Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is supporting local authority partners and investing in developing a world-class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient travel across the region and will reduce the need for private car journeys on our already congested roads. The bus plays a vital role in this system carrying significantly more passenger than any other mode per annum, with the widest network coverage across the region.

The bus carries 4 out of 5 public transport trips in our region and remains the most important, adaptable and flexible mode. It is crucial to define its purpose in the region's integrated transport system to help the bus reach its potential.

Setting a vision for bus in the West Midlands will enable the region to develop its vital role and strive towards ensuring that the mode can thrive, supporting and connecting major rail and Metro investment, connecting communities and towns, and helping to build a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous region.

“

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all across the West Midlands.

With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options.

Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.

”

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has set out an ambitious plan for growth in its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to transform the regional economy. By 2030, the SEP plans for:



500,000
new jobs



20,000
more businesses



16,000
additional hectares
of employment land



215,000
additional homes

The SEP sets the overarching vision for the region. This will be delivered through an aspirational and robust programme to accelerate improvements in productivity and the quality of life for everyone in the region. The SEP recognises that an efficient and resilient transport system will underpin future economic success, by connecting communities to opportunities, and by connecting businesses to markets.

Movement for Growth, the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, sets out an ambitious plan to greatly improve the transport system to support economic growth and regeneration, new development and housing, and improve air quality, the environment and social inclusion. A 10-year delivery plan accompanies Movement for Growth, outlining key supporting transport projects that will deliver many of these outcomes over the coming decade.

Transport is fundamental to economic development and growth to enable the region to thrive and ensure we deliver on our Local Industrial Strategy, Housing Deal and Public Service Reform. Bus is a vital component to this as it directly supports access to the labour market, and allows people to access education, employment and services.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), the transport arm of the WMCA, has developed a Vision for Bus to ensure the delivery of a world-class integrated transport system, which allows convenient travel across the region by public transport that is affordable and accessible for all and reduces congestion on our roads.

TfWM's move towards of an integrated transport system is epitomised through the new West Midlands Transport brand, which brings a single identity to the public transport system in the West Midlands, with each mode having its own distinctive livery. Offering an integrated transport system is key for delivering genuine choice in the way people travel around the region, with car travel not having to be the default choice for travel.

Within the existing West Midlands public transport offering, buses play a fundamental role in supporting travel and accessibility. Whilst the bus network is facing certain challenges, including falling patronage and declining speeds, it remains the most popular and important mode of public transport in the region. This vision will help to develop the network for bus to ensure it continues to effectively serve the region, and can adapt and embrace innovation and opportunities to meet current and future travel demand and patterns.

Helping to overcome the region's strategic challenges as outlined in the SEP, with transport interventions:

1

Supporting an accessible network

Addressing transport barriers (accessibility, availability and affordability) for excluded groups

2

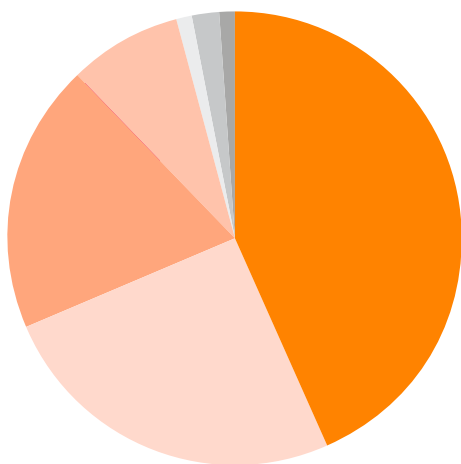
Delivering support that connects people to key employment and skills opportunities

Ensuring growth is inclusive by helping the most vulnerable and isolated groups share in prosperity

3

Ensuring alignment with the Public Service Reform agenda

Targeting interventions which secure better for less from public services, improving the life chances and the health and wellbeing of communities



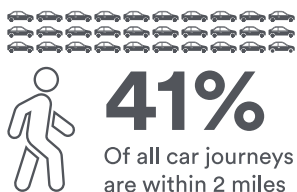
NTS data on average annual (main mode) trips per West Midlands metropolitan area resident (2015-2017)

Drive (43%)
Walk (19%)
Rail and Metro (1%)
Cycle (1%)
Lift (25%)
Bus (8%)
Taxi (2%)

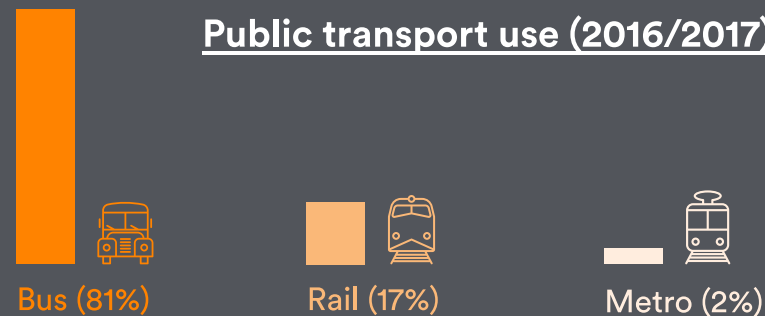


216,000

Fewer people are within a 45 minute bus journey time of Birmingham city centre compared to 2008 because of congestion



Public transport use (2016/2017)



A growing region

Between now and 2035, our region will grow every day, by:

100 people

Which is the equivalent of filling an extra...



1.5
buses



84
cars



0.5
trams



Bus passenger satisfaction at **88%**

Largest commercially operated bus network in the UK with
75 million vehicle miles



90%
of the urban area of the West Midlands within 400 metres of a bus stop



Bus punctuality at
82%

We fund 6.8million vehicle miles of socially necessary services and 850,000 Ring & Ride journeys each year



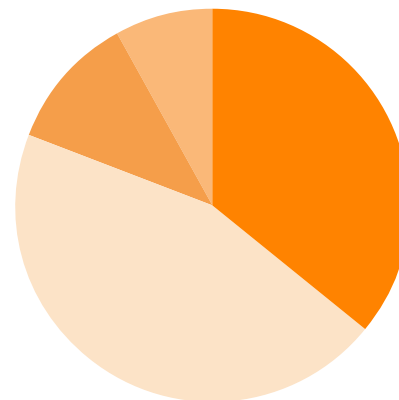
We manage 12 bus stations, maintain almost 12,000 bus stops and 1,750 RTI displays

Over 50%

of students are frequent bus users and depend on the bus to get to their education or training



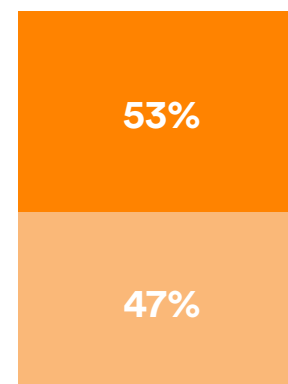
Journey Purpose by Bus 2018



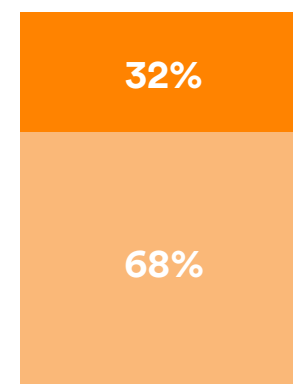
Work (36%) Shopping/Leisure (45%) Education (11%)
Personal Business (8%)

Car ownership in the West Midlands

No car in household Car in household



Bus users



All West Midlands

The region's bus network has an indisputable, but often undervalued, role in powering the region's economy. It reaches every corner of our conurbation, providing an essential mobility service to access employment, education and leisure. It is the backbone of the region's public transport system.

Whereas rail and Metro patronage is growing, bus is seeing a patronage decline. However, buses still carry over three times more passengers a year than Metro and rail combined, with over 257 million passenger journeys in 2017/18.

Despite continued falling bus patronage in the region, it provides the widest and densest network of travel options for distances that are too long to walk or cycle, with 90% of urban areas within 400 metres of a bus stop.

The flexibility of the bus network also makes buses the perfect means of providing public transport options in areas of growth, changing travel demand and new housing, supporting the West Midlands Housing Deal and Local Industrial Strategy. This means that buses are central to supporting regeneration, inclusive growth and social integration. Where there may not be a case for investing in permanent rail and light rail infrastructure, new bus infrastructure can be planned to connect new communities and support housing and jobs growth.

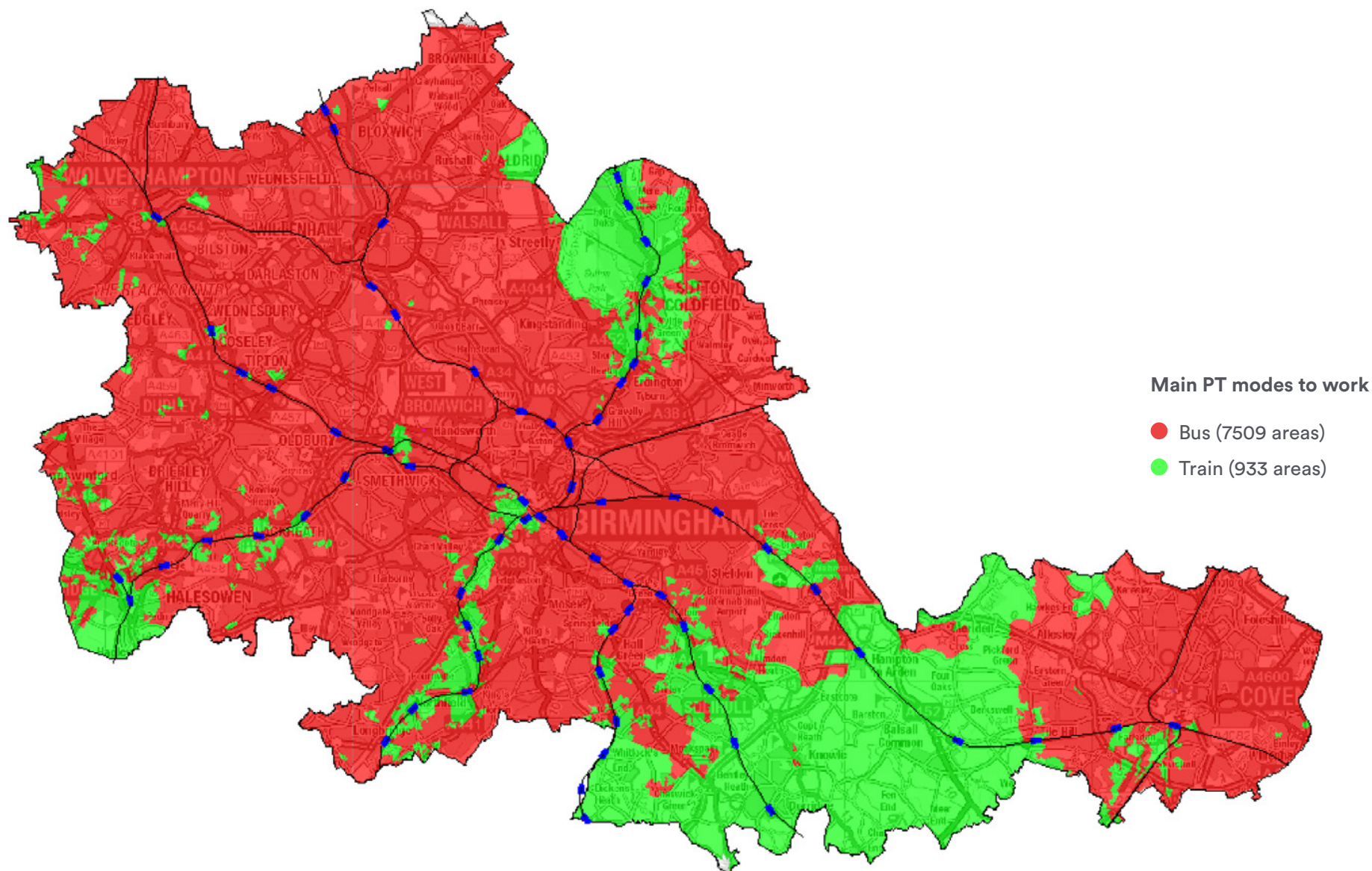
Buses should be treated as infrastructure. Bus infrastructure is essential to our lives and work. Having modern and accessible bus infrastructure throughout the region is fundamental to our future inclusive growth and long-term productivity. Treating buses as infrastructure means considering all aspects of bus; new vehicles; new and enhanced bus services; new bus infrastructure including highway measures; at-stop infrastructure and walking infrastructure to bus; as well as data, technology and passenger information.

We can do more for bus. Challenges, such as congestion, are restricting the mode's ability to reach its potential; whilst ongoing interventions have helped improve conditions to a certain degree, there are further opportunities to explore that can improve how we link up people and markets to attract investment and significantly improve the overall product of bus.



Main public transport mode used to access work (train/bus)

(with rail network, based on LSOA areas)



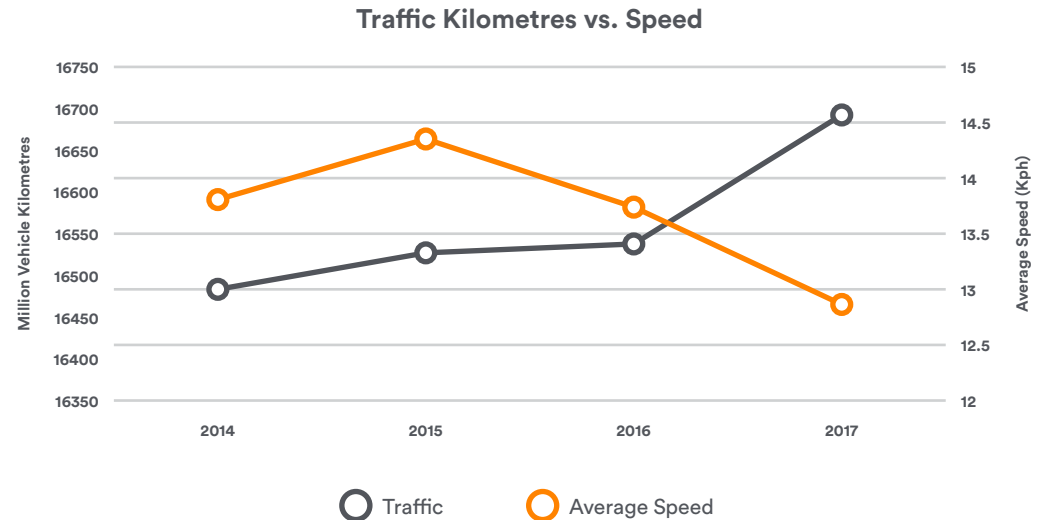
There are a number of challenges that buses face in the West Midlands, restraining its ability to be as reliable, accessible, well-used and affordable as possible.

The Congestion Challenge

The West Midlands economy has seen sustained growth in recent years, increasing faster than the national economy to make the region a national leader in attracting inward investment. This continued economic success means that travel demand has also grown rapidly, with 2016 seeing record levels of traffic on the region's roads. With record levels of traffic comes record levels of congestion and as a result, bus speeds are reducing.

Congestion, if not managed properly, will continue to have direct costs to people and businesses; increasing business costs, affecting productivity and reducing accessibility to labour markets. Congestion also has a significant impact on the environment, accounting for 65% of nitrogen dioxide emissions along with increased noise pollution.

Congestion is set to worsen in the region as a result of major infrastructure projects such as HS2, 2022 Commonwealth Games and Metro construction, along with increased travel demand from population growth.



Congestion and the bus network

Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to suffer delays, variability in journey times and declining attractiveness. Congestion causes:

Journey Time Variability

Congestion is causing journey times to become less reliable, with journey time variations often much different to timetabled promises.

Decreasing accessibility

Congestion is slowing average bus speeds, meaning that accessibility is decreasing. As a result, less people can access locations in a reasonable journey time.

Decreasing attractiveness of bus

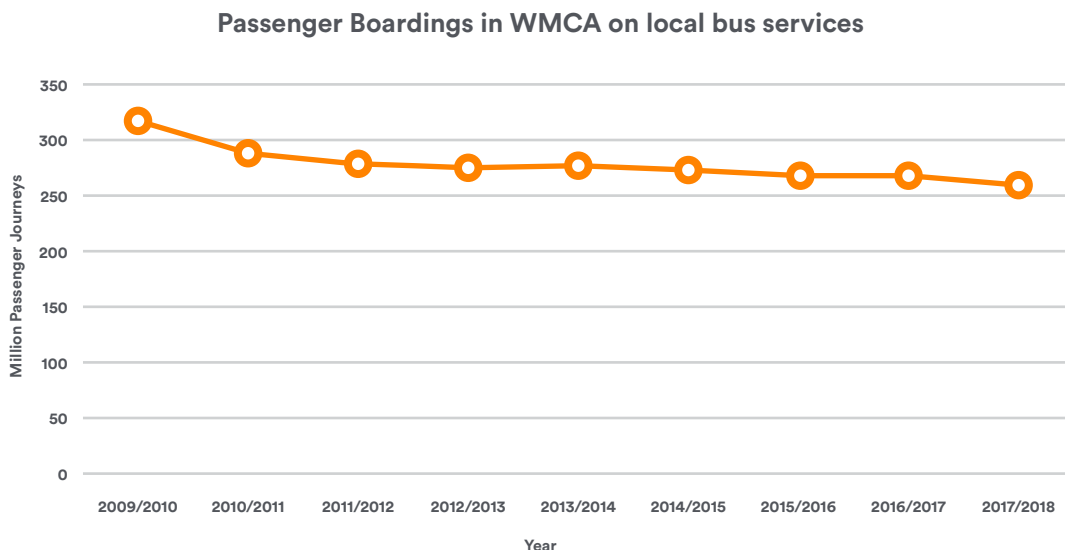
With increasing journey time variability and decreasing accessibility, buses are at risk of further patronage decline if people decide they cannot rely on the bus network.

The congestion challenge has also created existential threats to bus services in the region, where a continual reduction in speeds creates a cycle of fewer passengers leading to more car trips and creating more congestion.

Declining Patronage

Passenger journeys on the local West Midlands bus network have been declining, but at a lower rate than nationwide trends.

This has contributed to a reduction in network coverage within the West Midlands. In some areas we are no longer meeting our policy objectives on access to a bus service.



Vehicle Kilometres
 Reduced by
 approx. 2% a
 year since 2000

Bus Fares
 Increasing at
 approx. 2% a year in
 real terms since 2000

Air Quality

Poor air quality poses a great challenge to the region, contributing to almost 1,500 premature deaths per year. In all seven districts in the region, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and/or particular matter concentration thresholds are exceeded (relative to EU limits).

Transport, particularly single occupancy private cars, is a major contributor to pollution. Increased congestion in turn causes further pollution due to standing traffic, a situation that the bus system contributes too. The bus sector has consequently been a focus area for tackling poor local air quality. This will have a significant impact due to the size of the operation, as there are currently around 2,100 buses operating in West Midlands across 23 operators, with just over a fifth of the bus fleet consisting of Euro III buses.

Social Inequality

The West Midlands social inequality gap is growing with more people now living in poverty and receiving low incomes.

Vulnerable groups however rely significantly on the bus network, but issues including affordability, accessibility and availability of bus services can act as major barriers to people accessing key opportunities like employment and training. As the bus network is impacted, the most vulnerable people are further disadvantaged. This in turn further contributes to a decline in their quality of life, widening the social inequality gap.

Bus passenger feedback allows us to monitor the performance of the bus network in the West Midlands. The Bus Passenger Survey in spring 2018 showed:



88%

Overall journey satisfaction



86%

Journey time satisfaction



76%

Punctuality satisfaction



67%

Value for money



Perception vs. Reality

There are many preconceived ideas around using the bus that act as a barrier to its usage.

A 'Demystifying the Bus Network' study was commissioned by TfWM to investigate perceived and actual barriers to bus travel with new and unfamiliar bus users. It compared their preconceived perceptions of the bus with actual perceptions of the bus once they had undertaken an accompanied bus journey.

Negative perceptions before undertaking a journey:

- Uncertainty on cost and payment method
- Safety
- Attitude and driving style of bus drivers
- Practicality of travelling with children on the bus
- Comfort
- Journey times

Feelings after undertaking a journey:

- Pleasantly surprised with cleanliness and physical comfort of the bus
- Buying a ticket (online and on-board) was more difficult than expected

These findings demonstrate that there are a number of improvements which need to take place in order to overcome negative and unfounded perceptions of bus travel.

TfWM has influenced the bus network in the West Midlands to improve service delivery in the region. This includes the creation of the West Midlands Bus Alliance, a Congestion Management Plan, Bus Alliance Network Development Plans, West Midlands Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan and other local bus enhancements on key corridors.

West Midlands Bus Alliance

Established in 2015, the West Midlands Bus Alliance brings together TfWM, bus operators, local councils and other partners to collaboratively deliver high levels of passenger satisfaction and drive forward investment in our bus services. The partnership is committed to making bus travel in the West Midlands cleaner, greener, safer and faster.

The Alliance challenges all partners to meet improved standards on key issues such as vehicle emissions, network performance, branding, punctuality and fares representing an investment of £150m.

Bus Alliance Key Achievements: 2015-18

Over £40m

invested by operators in Euro VI buses since 2015

Over £10m

invested to tackle bus congestion on the highways since 2016

105,000

16-18 year olds eligible for half-price travel, contactless ticketing and the introduction of nBus low fare zones, making bus travel more affordable

3 Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes (AQPS) and 2 Partnership routes to drive up bus service and vehicle standards and Network Development Plans to shape local networks in support of inclusive economic growth

The bold new West Midlands Transport brand has been brought to life with the first branded buses in operation

The Safer Travel Partnership (STP) has reduced overall recorded crime and funding has been allocated to expand the use of Vemotion technology, which allows for the transmission of 'live' CCTV from buses

TfWM's Congestion Management Plan (CMP) has been created to help tackle congestion in the region. Whilst there is no single solution for alleviating congestion, there are many smaller interventions that together will combine to make a big difference. The CMP is built on three core pillars:

- **Increasing capacity**
- **Improving efficiency**
- **Managing demand**

As congestion is having a detrimental impact on bus speeds, the CMP will provide vital relief, helping to improve bus speed and reliability in the region. By aligning the Vision for Bus with the CMP, buses will play a credible and active role in the CMP by offering an accessible transport alternative to the car. The better the bus network and service offering, the more compelling it will be as an alternative for private car use, thereby reducing congestion.



Lode Lane is a key corridor in providing access to over 20,000 job roles in Solihull Town Centre and at Jaguar Land Rover, as well as wider access to Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the UK Central Hub. Lode Lane is one of the busiest bus corridors in the region, generating a bus every two minutes during peak periods which carry more people into Solihull Town Centre during mornings than in cars.

The Council worked collaboratively with Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, TfWM and National Express West Midlands to deliver a comprehensive route intervention between Jaguar Land Rover and Solihull Town Centre, including new bus lanes and bus priority at junctions. Furthermore, National Express West Midlands invested over £2 million in upgrading existing bus fleets. Critically, the scheme was delivered by maximising existing road space with no loss of service to general traffic.

The scheme opened in October 2016 and has achieved a 45% reduction in bus journey times in the morning peak hour into Solihull Town Centre. Bus patronage has increased by 11%, and there is now an enhanced environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



In the short-term buses are flexible enough to adapt to changing travel patterns and can accommodate rapid increases in travel demand. In the medium to long term buses can catalyse benefit realisation of more strategic mass-transit through improved interchange and integration, thereby improving connectivity between jobs, housing and education.

Inclusive Growth

At the heart of the SEP sits an ambitious skills agenda to ensure that all can benefit from economic growth. Bridging the skills gap will however need a spatial focus on those communities with high levels of worklessness. These areas typically see people in or at risk of poverty and have low levels of car ownership where people are reliant on the bus to access education and work opportunities. In these areas congestion disproportionately impacts upon bus users, increasing journey times and reducing potential job catchments. These factors ultimately create barriers to people and communities most in need of change and restrict the inclusive growth of the region.

The bus is therefore vital in achieving inclusive growth in the region and WMCA's Local Industrial Strategy. By increasing the accessibility, speed and affordability of buses we enable greater access to education and employment opportunities, strengthening our economic success and productivity.



Achieving a modal shift through service quality and innovation in bus

Sprint is a planned bus rapid transit scheme that will offer a similar level of service and comfort to a tram. It will operate on the highway like a bus with a limited stop service and dedicated bus lanes on major high volume routes.

Sprint will enable greater accessibility and quicker, more reliable journey times, helping the region to increase productivity whilst decreasing congestion on the region's roads. It provides the opportunity to encourage a greater modal shift from private cars with its enhanced level of service and comfort.

Accommodating Travel Demand

Although the bus network has experienced challenges associated with falling patronage, reduced accessibility and increasing costs, we have started to see more people travelling by bus. On a number of key routes, investment in new vehicles, lower fares and journey time improvements has attracted increased travel demand on bus, particularly among young people.

With an estimated 500,000 additional jobs, and 215,000 additional homes by 2030, there is huge potential for more people to use the bus to facilitate the expected growth in transport demand, and design a network to cater to this employment and housing growth across the region. New routes will be planned to connect new and existing communities with jobs to support our new housing through the West Midlands Housing Deal and Local Industrial Strategy.

Network Resilience

The region is undergoing a period of considerable growth and investment, but there are imminent challenges resulting from the concurrent construction programmes of the SEP, HS2, Highways England's Motorway upgrades and the 2026 Delivery Plan.

The ability for buses to accommodate rapid increases in travel demand will be an essential tool for mitigating these challenges. However, the CMP acknowledges that congestion will increase in the short-term from the wider array of construction schemes.

A greater uptake in public transport usage will be beneficial in mitigating this; with bus being the most flexible, accessible and affordable mode of public transport across the region.

Buses must also be protected from further disruption, and resilience strategies around bus will be key to protecting bus users from negative impacts of construction.

Air Quality

Putting bus at the centre of our approach to air quality is the quickest and most cost-effective solution to tackling this challenge. Through committed bus retrofit programmes, new vehicle procurement and the introduction of Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes setting minimum vehicle emission standards, the emission standards of the bus fleet is expected to significantly improve with an aspiration to have all buses at least Euro VI by the end of 2020.

With the proposed introduction of Birmingham's Clean Air Zone, the bus will be an essential tool in ensuring that people can still travel to and from the city centre.

Continual innovation in bus fuel technology presents opportunities to further improve fuel efficiency and emissions from the bus network, including zero emission vehicles, which will further help accelerate air quality improvements in the region.

Ticketing

The West Midlands has the largest smart ticketing scheme in the UK outside London (Swift), accepted on buses and trams and on the train for direct debit customers (with plans to roll out the full range of Swift onto rail, including Pay As-You-Go).

Swift provides tailored discounts and offers, supporting behaviour change. There is an opportunity to expand its capabilities to make multi-modal travel easier and cheaper. Work is underway to improve the customer experience through improved digital channels, contactless payments and further roll out of fare capping.

Safety

The Safer Travel Partnership, which was launched in 2006 and includes West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), has helped cut crime on the network by 70% over the last eight years. There is now just one offence in every 60,000 bus journeys.

While crime on the buses is actually low, witnessing anti-social behaviour can undermine people's sense of security and safety that can lead to an unfounded fear of crime. This can result in people choosing not to go by bus and that means more congestion and pollution. No one should have to put up with bad behaviour which is why officers and bus inspectors will continue to operate a zero tolerance approach to bad behaviour, utilising advancements in technology, to take firm and effective action whenever it is encountered. This, along with advancements to vehicle safety provides the opportunity to further change the negative perception of safety on bus travel.

Transport Innovation

There are technological and digital opportunities that have the potential to revolutionise local bus travel in the UK's first Future Mobility Area. Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) both offer the potential for changing the way in which people travel in the region.

The data revolution presents an opportunity to change the way we consume data and access information. With 5G, there is an opportunity to deliver enhancements such as real time journey information to passengers, smart payment methods across all modes and access to live CCTV streams to increase passenger safety.

Opportunities to shape the network

As a Combined Authority WMCA and TfWM have powers that can influence the bus network in the West Midlands. Along with powers around the Key Route Network, bus lane enforcement, and safety and security, the Bus Services Act 2017 provides new powers which can allow a greater degree of influence on the local bus network. TfWM will explore how these powers can be used to achieve our vision for bus in the West Midlands.

Integration with other modes

There is an opportunity to ensure that buses link seamlessly with metro, rail and Sprint routes, to facilitate easy multi-modal travel and local, regional and national travel. This is fundamental for creating an integrated transport system in order to move away from a reliance on cars in the region. Switching between modes will be easier and cheaper through our integrated ticketing systems and further enhancements to Swift, the region's smart travel card.





Without widespread uplift in the use of public transport, the region's growth ambitions set out in the SEP will be severely impeded as congestion continues to grow, eventually choking inward investment in jobs and discouraging people from living in the region. At the heart of this approach is recognition that road space is a scarce commodity, where an increasing emphasis on people-moving capacity instead of moving-motor-vehicle capacity will be required to ensure everyone can benefit from growth.

There is often a trade-off between bus having to provide an essential mobility service, whilst simultaneously offering a service which competes

with more direct modes of transport such as the private car. The bus however continues to be the most accessible and affordable mode of public transport across the region, and opportunities exist to exploit the many benefits that the mode has towards achieving the wider WMCA goals such as inclusive growth, increased productivity and improved air quality.

Decreasing speeds and reliability from road congestion is especially suppressing the potential of the bus network in supporting the region's ambitions. Buses need to be given greater priority through a step-change in investment to ensure bus infrastructure and the network supports the

anticipated scale and shape of growth across the region. Whilst our interventions to date have been beneficial, new opportunities exist that have the potential to further enhance the mode's offering across the region and overcome the major challenges faced.

Before we can assess these opportunities available for overcoming the challenges faced by bus however, we need to establish our fundamental vision for bus in the West Midlands. With an established vision, we can then assess what options will be most effective for achieving it.

“

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all across the West Midlands.

With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options.

Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.

”

1. **UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.** We will improve our natural environment by continuing to work with local bus operators and the diverse supply chain to accelerate the transition to zero emission vehicles across the region; to achieve the cleanest bus fleet in any Metropolitan area of the UK and utilising new clean technology to grow zero emission travel and the movement of people.
2. **Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network.** We will provide one transport system where customers can move easily and conveniently between modes and travel on an integrated bus network, supported by new and innovative forms of bus travel and connecting Sprint and all other modes of public transport. The basis of this integrated bus network will be a simple, core turn up and go frequency network, supported by local bus services providing network coverage.
3. **Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options including full capping providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.** We will provide an integrated and multimodal payment solution that uses the latest digital technology to make it easier and quicker than ever before to access the bus network. The payment technology will be valid across all operators and will remove the complexity of fares planning through intelligent capping that provides best value without the customers needing prior knowledge of fares. It will also provide access to the wider integrated transport system and will be supported by a Fares and Payment Strategy.
4. **Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.** We will plan for long-term inclusive economic growth by treating bus as the infrastructure in a place-based approach on growth corridors and at specific sites; bringing together the right bus infrastructure (i.e. highways, services, data and technology) with housing, jobs and skills to enable more people and places to achieve economic success, attract investment and support long-term productivity.
5. **Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions.** We are committed to creating a safer transport network for all passengers in the West Midlands and will continue the Safer Travel Partnership with West Midlands Police and British Transport Police, with the aim of preventing and reducing crime on the bus network. We will ensure bus vehicle, at-stop and interchange safety and accessibility standards, so the bus network meets the needs of all customers at all times, regardless of any impaired mobility, ultimately transforming the perception of bus travel.
6. **Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.** We will manage the network with the Regional Transport Control Centre (RTCC) that provides a coordinating umbrella across all modes and transport partners, for how we manage daily network operations, planned construction and sporting events and incident responses to keep people moving and the West Midlands open for business. Alongside the RTCC, there will be investment in the sensor technology to improve the efficiency and management of the local road network and monitoring of performance on the Key Route Network (KRN).
7. **World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.** We will be the first 5G ready region in the UK, trialling new high-speed connectivity and technology for improved customer information and network management, as well as making our buses and bus infrastructure safer using artificial intelligence (AI), and building on our success as the UK's first Future Mobility Area to trial and demonstrate new modes of transport, services and technologies, like Mobility as a Service (MaaS).
8. **Younger people supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.** We will aim to ensure that everyone has the same access to transport and that everyone can travel easily, confidently and without extra cost. In particular, we will develop an offer for young people accessing jobs and training opportunities as well as supporting other excluded groups with barriers. This will involve designing and delivering services in a genuinely inclusive way with recognition to all vulnerable groups. We will also ensure future transport technologies are designed in an inclusive way to open up new opportunities for currently excluded groups.
9. **Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.** We will improve the network by providing the right local bus infrastructure to build the connections that people need for improved access to existing skills, jobs and leisure for all our communities and networks at any time of the day. This will build on the delivery of Sprint and our existing bus delivery programme commitments and Network Development Plans to deliver improved bus journey times and services; as well as working with private sector partners to trial new and innovative forms of public transport and underpinning a multi-modal transport system.

Short Term Priorities

Small scale local highway schemes, focussed on ‘quick win’ measures at traffic black spots, can realise noticeable reductions in congestion quickly and cheaply. This could include traffic signal optimisation, lining/ kerbing changes and/ or traffic regulation orders. There is also an opportunity to work alongside the development of Sprint to bring forward measures that are of low complexity and which could deliver early benefits to the bus network.

Optimising Existing Assets

Much of the region’s highway infrastructure for buses and passenger facilities has been in operation for a considerable period. In this time there have been changes in traffic characteristics, highways layouts, travel patterns and bus services. It is proposed that we review all existing bus priority schemes and passenger facilities in the region to ensure they are still working for all road users and passengers.

Governance

WMCA will investigate the powers available through the Bus Services Act 2017 to understand the benefits and disbenefits of the options available for delivering bus services.

In addition, we will continue to seek investment and further devolution of powers from Government which will assist in our plans to deliver a bus network that works for everyone in the region.

Bus Alliance

Through the Bus Alliance we will continue to work with bus operators and other partners in the region to ensure that bus improvements are made, and ensure the delivery of existing commitments in the West Midlands Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan and Bus Alliance Network Development Plans.

Delivering an Integrated System

TfWM will continue to explore how smart technology, transport innovation, data and 5G can be exploited in the UK’s first Future Mobility Area to deliver an integrated transport system in the region.

Delivering smart payment technology, real time passenger information and integrated fare structures are an essential part of seamless modal integration. Furthermore, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has the potential to greatly influence the travel behaviours of people in the West Midlands, and TfWM will continue to assess how best we can utilise the innovative software platform in our Future Mobility Area. New modes such as Sprint and Demand Responsive Transport can help transform and complement the conventional bus, and we will explore how to best exploit the benefits.

Looking to the Future

We will continue to measure the success of the bus network and keep our options open in seeking the best opportunities to deliver our regional vision. This will be supported by a delivery plan.

We will regularly review our policies to ensure we can deliver on our pledges.



Transport for
West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands

Building a healthier, happier, better connected
and more prosperous West Midlands.

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD | 0345 303 6760

To request a copy of this document in a different format, please get in touch.

Bus Service Improvement Plan

Page 91

Publication date:
5 November 2021



Transport for
West Midlands



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Contents

Page 92

Foreword	3	Part C: Our Proposals for Improvement	31 - 48
Introduction	4	Proposed Investment Programmes to 2025	31
Part A: The Current Situation	5 - 27	Network Design and Integration	32 - 35
Economic context and the importance of bus	5 - 6	Increases in bus priority and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	36 - 38
Alignment with vision and policy	7 - 9	Lower, simpler fares and integrated ticketing	29 - 40
Local investment in bus	8	Customer Information and Infrastructure	41 - 42
Our current bus offer	10 - 19	Modern buses and Decarbonisation	43 - 44
Challenges in achieving our Vision for Bus	20 - 24	Customer Experience	45
Customer perceptions	25	Passenger Safety	46
Acknowledging the uncertainty in the long term	26	Longer term transformation of the network	47
How we have developed our BSIP collaboratively	27	BSIP Funding	48
Part B: Our Objectives and Targets	28 - 30	Making it happen at pace	49
How we are addressing the challenges we face	28	Appendix: BSIP Overview	50 -53
Key objectives for our BSIP	29	Appendix: Logic Map	54
Targets and Monitoring	30		



**Mayor of the West Midlands
Andy Street**



**Portfolio Leader for Transport
Cllr Ian Ward**

The West Midlands does not grow without bus. Buses are the most essential part of our public transport network, reaching into all corners of our communities, towns, and cities. Across the West Midlands, they enable access to jobs, health, education, retail and leisure, as well as connecting people through affordable transport. The bus network is an essential integrator to our rail and metro and important as we decarbonise transport.

Excellent bus services are pivotal in delivering a transport system that the region can be proud of, and our Bus Service Improvement Plan sets out how we intend to deliver that. In the West Midlands 4 out of every 5 public transport journeys were taken by bus before Covid 19 hit in early 2020. Whilst the West Midlands Bus Alliance has worked extensively to develop a collaborative approach to delivering better bus services, so much more is yet to be done to ensure that bus operators, local authorities, and other partners can achieve the ambitions of the West Midlands Vision for Bus, much of which is echoed by the Government's National Bus Strategy Bus Back Better, to achieve a truly integrated network that is relevant and attractive for residents and visitors.

Bus Back Better has set out the leading role that it expects Local Transport Authorities to take and has asked us to match the Government's ambition for buses, in which we stand ready to play our part, trusting in the Government

commitment to put LTAs at the heart of leading the recovery in public transport.

Buses matter to our residents, our employers, our workers, and our visitors. To support this we will use our Bus Alliance to bring about;

- Better Buses – with more zero emission buses
- Better Journeys – through an enhanced network with more bus priority
- Better Fares – by keeping the lowest, simplest fares in England

We have put the customer at the heart of our ambition and will raise the profile of their voice to deliver Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares.

We will deliver Better Buses - with 750 more zero emission buses by 2025 and the fastest region to 100% zero emission by 2030.

We will build Better Journeys - through an additional 106km of bus priority that supports a cross city and cross regional levelling up network of enhanced services, where Real Time Information, physically or virtually, will be able at every stop.

We will maintain Better Fares - with contactless payment across all operators' services to ensure best value for our customers.

Introduction

Page 94

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission public transport system providing inclusive travel all across the West Midlands.

With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options.

Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.

This prospectus sets out the West Midland Combined Authority's (WMCA) proposed Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme of bus investment – to be delivered through our award-winning West Midlands Bus Alliance with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), our local bus operators and our constituent Local Authorities.

The West Midlands is currently seeing one of the largest planned investments in fixed-line public transport infrastructure anywhere in the world, with £160 million on our first Sprint Bus Rapid Transit route and £1.05 billion through our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This is in addition to HS2, which includes two new stations for our region. Ensuring buses are at the heart of an integrated network will be critical and will boost the current bus ridership in support of the region's economic recovery.

This BSIP sets out our plans for continued investment to level up the West Midlands.

We will have **Better Buses** to cut carbon dependency and be the fastest to a 100% zero emission bus fleet.

We will create **Better Journeys** to tackle congestion with a massive 106km increase in bus priority, speeding up buses and making them reliable as part of a new cross-city and cross-regional bus network.

We will remove complication in ticketing to deliver **Better Fares**, simplifying our ticket range and keeping the lowest bus fares in England.

BSIP investment in the West Midlands, will provide a blueprint for how integrated urban transport systems should function and support inclusive economic growth and productivity. We are in a totally unique position to deliver this.

”

Part A: The Current Situation

Economic context and the importance of bus

Page 95

This West Midlands BSIP covers the area of the WMCA, as defined in the WMCA Constitution. The WMCA as geographically defined is made up of the 7 constituent local authority areas of Birmingham City Council; Coventry City Council; Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council; Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council; Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council; Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council. The WMCA has responsibility for working with the constituent local authorities to make the region a better place and is best placed to make the right decisions for the region and this area.



The largest Mayoral Combined Authority in the country



Home to 3 million residents



Supporting 91,150 businesses which employ 1.3 million people



£70.3 billion GVA per annum



2.5% annual growth between 2010 – 2018



¼ residents aged under 19



440,000 additional people by 2035



215,000 additional homes by 2030



Buses carried 4 of every 5 trips by public transport in the region pre-Covid.



Investing in buses in the West Midlands is an investment in levelling up our economy.



Buses are the integrator of our transport network and working collaboratively for a single integrated system is essential for the whole network to succeed.

Economic context and the importance of bus

Strong transport connectivity is vital to the economic prosperity of our region, supporting the productivity and growth of our key strategic sectors, as well as providing our most deprived communities with improved access to economic opportunities.



Largest bus network in England (outside London)



248 million boardings in 2019/20



Over 300 bus routes



2,000 buses



12 managed bus stations

The region's bus network has an indisputable, but often undervalued, role in our transport system. It reaches every corner of our region, providing an essential mobility service to access employment, education, leisure and other key facilities as well as providing integration with other transport. Buses are the modern day workhorse of our public transport system performing a key role in serving low demand areas in the region and for specialised travel demand patterns from socially excluded groups.

WMCA believe that buses are going to be integral to supporting the post-pandemic recovery and achieving wider policy goals such as decarbonisation and supporting behavioural change.

As we recover from the Covid pandemic, bus will play a key role in supporting access to jobs, promoting inclusive economic growth, levelling up the region and helping to achieve #WM2041 environmental goals.

In the short-term, with revenue support, the bus network is flexible enough to adapt to changing travel patterns and drive the return in travel demand, providing critical connections to jobs, housing and education, to Build Back Better.



Alignment with vision and policy

The West Midlands is well-placed to capitalise on the economic opportunity presented by further investment in our bus network through the BSIP.

We have been developing a series of long-term strategic plans setting out our ambitions for sustainable and inclusive growth. These policy documents – including our emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP), TfWM's Strategic Vision for Bus, and #WM2041 – complement and build upon the wider bus policy agenda of Government.

National Bus Strategy for England “Bus Back Better” objectives

- More frequent, ‘turn-up-and-go’ services on major urban routes
- Faster and more reliable services, with greater priority on urban roads
- Cheaper fares, with more daily price capping
- Simpler, easier to understand networks, with co-ordinated, high-frequency services
- Greener buses, with more ultra-low-emission and electric vehicles
- Returning patronage to pre COVID-19 levels and raising buses mode share in the longer-term



LTP Motives for Change

Page 98
This is also important to the current review of the West Midlands LTP. The published LTP Green Paper sets out five 'Motives for Change' - the reasons why we should consider changing the way we travel. These are focused on creating a fairer, greener, healthier, happier and more prosperous West Midlands, which is better connected and delivers on our #WM2041 carbon reduction pledges.



Delivering bus service improvements will play a key role in supporting our five motives for change, complementing new policy and pathways for regional and local transport. Whilst further work is still required to shape and develop the LTP, the role of land-use policy and demand management measures to restrain car use are critical to increase more sustainable travel behaviours.

The Motives for Change govern all our proposed transport investment programmes. They are the building blocks of the six investment themes of our CRSTS programme to ensure we deliver a single integrated transport programme for the West Midlands.

CRSTS investment themes

- Connecting Places
- Supporting Inclusive Growth
- Healthy Streets and Spaces
- Creating Resilient Networks and Communities
- Delivering a Green Revolution
- Making Behaviour Change Easy

Our BSIP is complementary to our CRSTS programme and other investment routes (i.e. Active Travel Fund, WM Investment Programme), as we aim to deliver this single integrated transport programme. This ensures our BSIP investment delivers for our region and key national priorities for economic growth and productivity, levelling-up and decarbonisation.

#WM2041

#WM2041 is our action plan for decarbonising the West Midlands in response to the pressing climate emergency and the ambition for the region to be carbon neutral by 2041. It calls for substantial investment of the order of £40bn over 21 years (2020-2041) and a 10-point strategy for decarbonising the region.

This BSIP will support several key pillars of this strategy, including encouraging modal shift from private vehicles to bus, reducing congestion and therefore emissions from idling vehicles, and decarbonising the bus fleet.

The objectives in this BSIP reflect the priorities set out in the Transport for West Midlands Vision for Bus (VfB) which was published in 2018. The ambitious VfB was developed to ensure the delivery of a world-class integrated transport system, allowing convenient travel across the region by public transport that is affordable and accessible for all and reduces congestion on our roads. These objectives link directly to the National Bus Strategy, emerging LTP and wider CRSTS investment programme to underpin the policy direction for our BSIP.

“

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel all across the West Midlands.

With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options.

Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.

”

The Vision for Bus objectives:

- 1** | Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change
- 2** | Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions
- 3** | Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network
- 4** | Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers
- 5** | Younger people supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups
- 6** | Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems
- 7** | World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms
- 8** | Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions
- 9** | UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving areas most affected by poor air quality

Local operators

Bus is the primary mode of public transport for West Midlands residents.

There are 24 operators which provide the bus services in the West Midlands. National Express (NX) – has the largest market share, accounting for 89% of scheduled mileage and 93% of bus journeys in 2019/2020. Diamond Bus, Arriva, Stagecoach and First operate half of the remaining services; Diamond Bus operates a number of routes within the West Midlands area whilst Arriva, Stagecoach and First run cross-boundary services to/from Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire respectively. The other half of the remaining services are operated by 19 operators and account for around 3% of the market.

The majority of service kilometres are operated commercially (90.4%) and the rest (9.6%) require public subsidy through the Transport Levy to operate. The number of commercial bus service kilometres (99m) decreased by -1.5% in 2019/20, whilst the number of subsidised bus service kilometres (10.6m) decreased by -5.7%. This was still the largest commercial bus network in England (outside London).

WMCA financial support for bus services

TfWM is funded by a specific transport levy from the WMCA of £114.7m. Approximately half of the levy funds the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) for free bus travel, for those who qualify. TfWM also provides a discretionary child concessionary fare scheme, and funds subsidised bus services and accessible bus services with a budget of £24.5m in 2021/22.

TfWM issues tenders for subsidised bus services which are not provided on a commercial basis but are socially necessary. TfWM currently hold a total of 159 contracts supporting 219 routes. Approximately 8.4 million passenger journeys were undertaken on subsidised bus services in 2019/20. The cost of operating subsidised bus services has been increasing.

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
£8.4m	£9.7m	£9.8m

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to the end of August 2021, commercial bus operators and TfWM received funding from the DfT COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) which was designed to ensure bus services can continue to operate at full-service levels despite significantly reduced patronage levels.

From 1 September 2021 to March 2022, a new Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) has been supporting operators and local authorities based upon a grant formula rather than ‘topping up’ operators to cover their costs.

The West Midlands bus network requires Government support to ensure the network remains stable up to and including the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Summer 2022.

Following the Commonwealth Games the West Midlands bus network will be reviewed as part of the Enhanced Partnership process.

Key corridors and the network

11

Page 104
The West Midlands has a comprehensive bus network with a significant number of services on the core radial routes already operating on a turn up and go level of frequency.

Although not formally defined, the core network is made up of the key routes in the region that connect the main commercial centres and local communities. This core network operates 7 days a week and has long operating hours. The earliest weekday service starts at 0430hrs and the last weekday service ending at 0030hrs.

The geographical coverage of the bus network is extensive, with 61% of the built-up area within 400m of a stop with a weekday daytime service of at least 6 buses an hour and increasing to 91% within 800m. There are, gaps in the geographic coverage of this turn-up-and-go core network, especially in the Black Country, and Solihull.

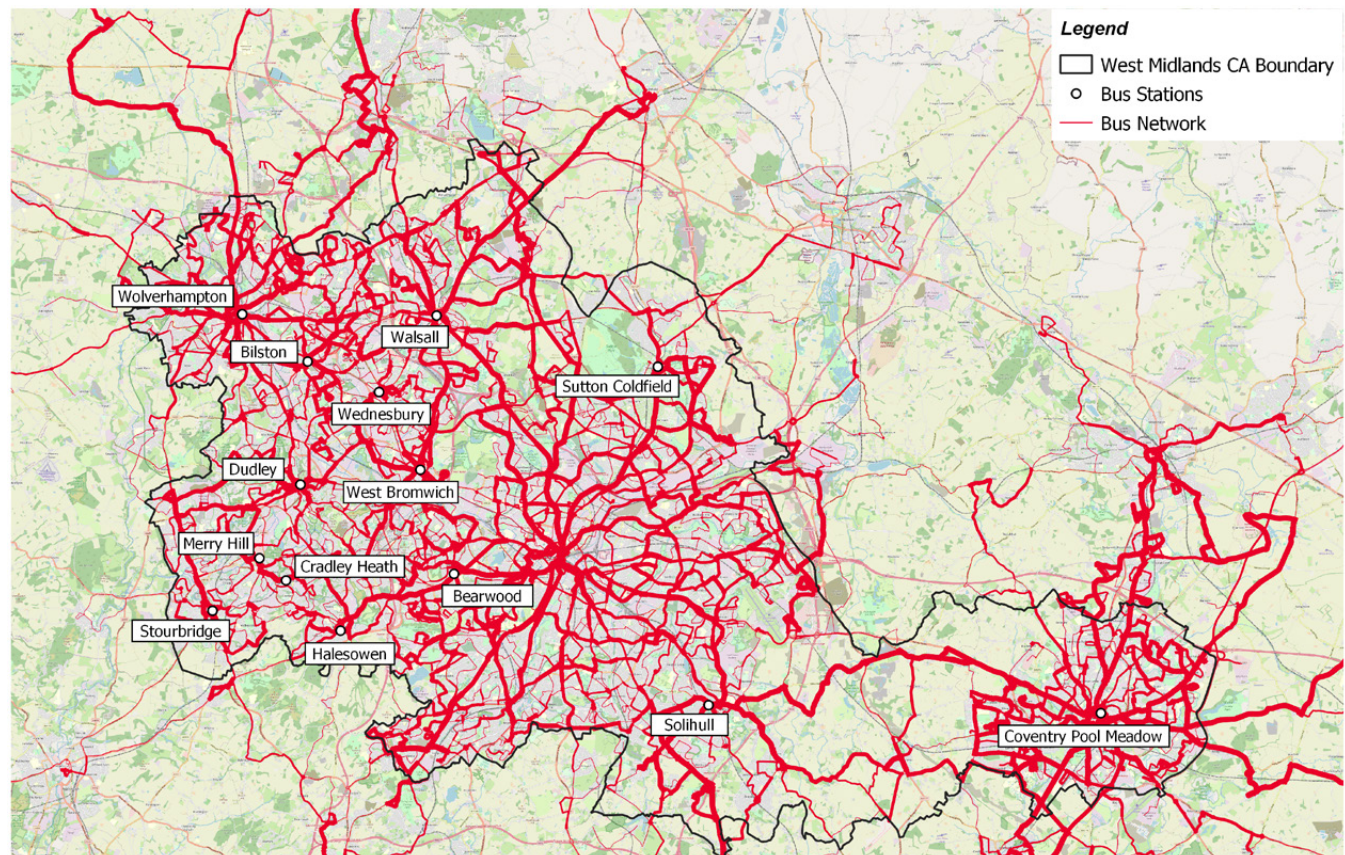
Due to challenges with how information is presented, the turn-up-and-go core network is easily mixed up with lower frequency routes.

Underpinning the core network is a series of local services which provide essential links to local commercial centres, employment, leisure and the core bus or rail networks. These services typically run at a lower frequency than the core network and operate

over a shorter period of the day based upon commercial demand, but still play an essential role in connecting our communities.

The current bus network has been developed in partnership with and by commercial operators over time to meet existing levels of demand and travel patterns.

However, the current delivery model incentivises operators to provide a higher level of services where there is sufficient commercial demand which is not always replicated at non-peak times without funding from TfWM. This has resulted in a network which does not always provide a comprehensive level of service to customers particularly on the shoulders of the operational day.



Key corridors and the network

12

Page 109

The West Midlands bus network also consists of vitally important accessible transport services such as Ring and Ride and community transport services. Accessible transport performs an essential service for people who find it difficult to use conventional public transport due to ill health and/or a disability.

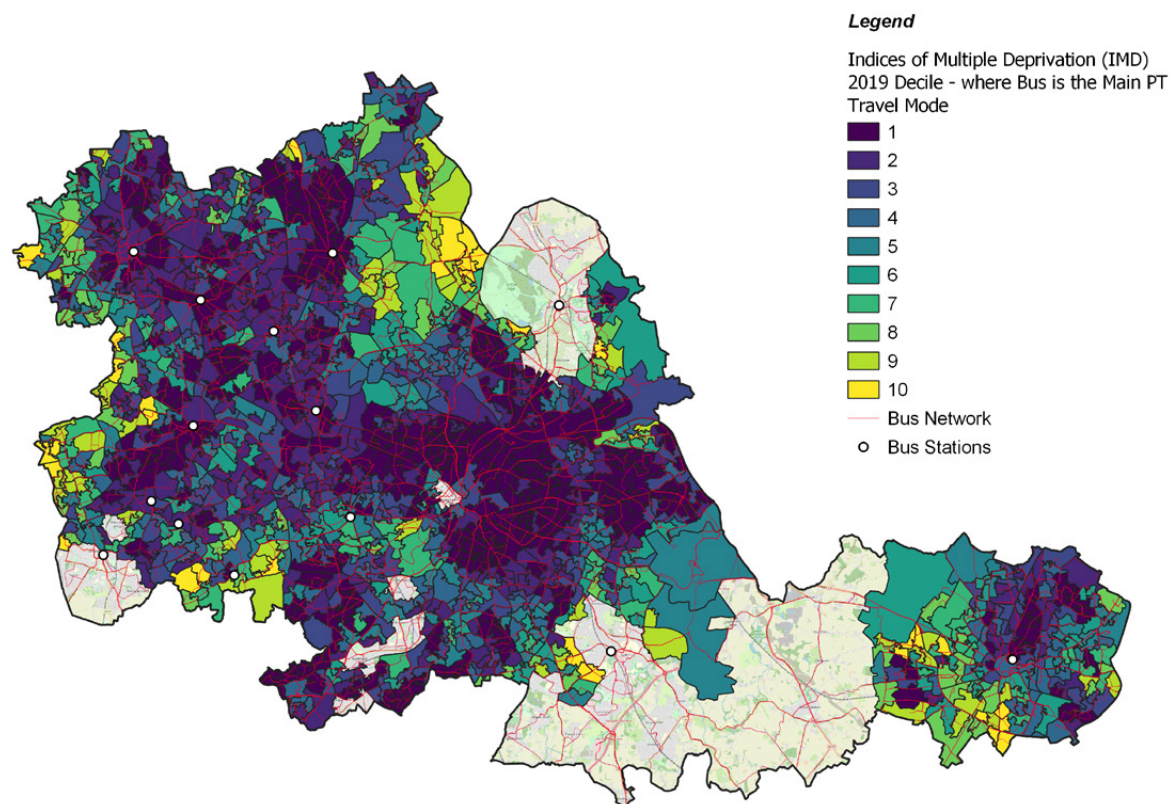
Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is another area providing an opportunity for the West Midlands. We are currently trialling DRT serving the University of Warwick in the West Midlands Future Transport Zone (FTZ). A mobility credits scheme is also being trialled in this FTZ to see the impact of the Coventry scheme on customer travel choices.



Bus network and deprivation

Buses are crucial for those who lack access to a private vehicle, those on the lowest incomes, and for those living in the most deprived communities. The West Midlands has some of the most deprived wards in England (19% of the West Midlands sits in the 10% most deprived areas in the UK) and circa 25% of residents do not have access to a car, with this increasing to 40% in some of our most deprived communities.

Indices of deprivation where bus is the main mode of public transport



Increasing bus priority is a key area of opportunity. Transport is fundamental to our region's economic growth, but congestion on our roads remains a challenge to our ambitions. In deprived areas where there is a greater dependency on buses to access education and work opportunities, congestion disproportionately impacts bus users, increasing journey times and reducing potential job catchments. These factors ultimately create barriers to people and communities most in need of change and restrict inclusive economic growth.

Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to see a decline in patronage and higher operating costs. Congestion makes journey times unreliable due to significant differences in the timetabled promise and the actual journey. Congestion also slows down the average speeds of buses, increasing operating costs and meaning that less people can access locations in a reasonable journey time. Bus speeds have been falling by around 1% annually. These factors not only make bus a less attractive option to existing and potential customers, but also pushes them into choosing private vehicles for journeys, which exacerbates congestion.

We currently have 53km of bus lane across the West Midlands. We have begun tackling the issue of congestion holding back the bus network.

Over £40m has been invested through the Bus Alliance to make bus journeys easier and quicker with more bus lanes, tackling congestion hotspots and seeing patronage increases.

- **£9.2m highway upgrades and new Platinum buses across the region = +14% patronage**
- **£4.7m Lode Lane Bus Priority, Solihull = +11% patronage**
- **£0.8m Harborne Road bus lane, Birmingham = 4% patronage**

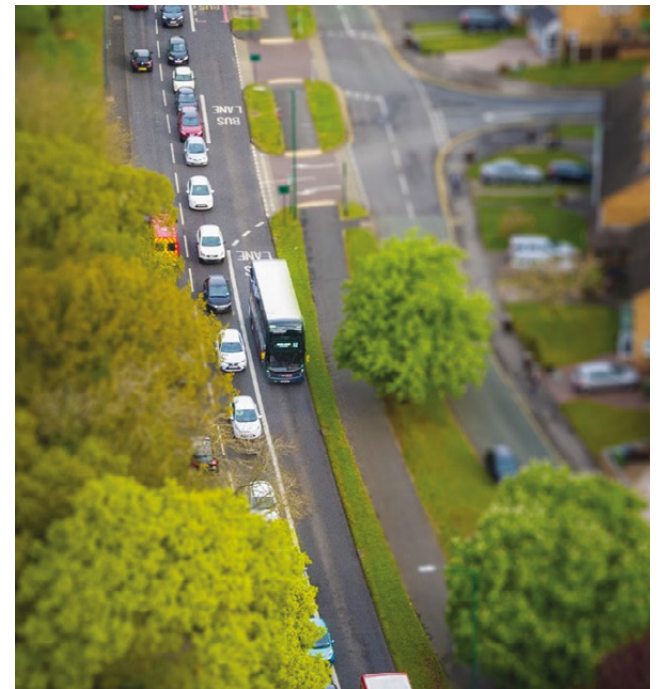
More needs to be done - our first Sprint bus rapid transit route, operating from 2022 will provide a level of service, comfort and presence close to a tram, providing dependable, shorter journey times for customers.

Sprint will provide direct cross-city services between the Black Country, north and the west of Birmingham, Solihull, and links into the wider transport network. This route will

be a blueprint for other services to tackle congestion and deliver Better Journeys.

This £88m investment for Phase 1 of the Sprint network will provide a new reliable bus based rapid transit service and improved journey times for over 20 million bus passengers.

We are also planning additional investment in Sprint Phase 2 (A45 and A34) through our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.





The complexity of the ticketing challenges is a known barrier to bus travel as is evidenced from passenger surveys in the West Midlands, where many customers reported concern and uncertainty regarding information on the cost of bus tickets. The local bus market is the only market where the price of the product the customer wished to buy is only revealed when they get to the till – or in this case, board the bus.

National Express is the largest operator in the West Midlands, and this has resulted in a competitive advantage over its rival operators with regards to season tickets, price differentials and the retail network. In addition to the wide range of tickets offered by National Express, a number of other operators such as Diamond, Stagecoach and Arriva also offer their own range of tickets. There is a multi-operator ticketing scheme (nBus) that offers the same tickets as National Express, enabling the customer to travel on all operators' services, and multi-modal ticketing with Metro and Train (nNetwork) – but at a premium price.

In addition to the differing commercial motivations of the operators, inconsistent technological resources present other challenges.

Despite the introduction of the Swift Go product – which offers best value capping for 1 day, 3 days and 7 days of travel – and the rollout of contactless payments across all operators, the solution is still sub-optimal. Contactless is currently not available between operators preventing customers from benefitting from the best price ticketing.

There is clearly scope for radical simplification and significant improvement to the ticketing aspect of service integration. Due to the strength of TfWM's partnerships with bus operators, we can make it easier and cheaper for more residents.

We are also uniquely placed to deliver a multi-operator and multi-modal contactless payment solution that will ensure best value capped fares for customers when travelling on various modes of public transport throughout the region. This solution will require significant funding in order to be implemented – our recent CRSTS prospectus included £20m to fund a back-office payment system that aggregates contactless payments across all operators and modes of transport.

TfWM has the largest and most comprehensive smart ticket solution in the UK outside of London and the largest multi-operator ticketing scheme (when measured on sales and revenue).

We were the only region to reduce fares in July 2021 to support recovery. We were the first to introduce daily, 3-day and 7-day contactless capping.

However, the operation of local bus services has resulted in a wide range of tickets, where many people don't know the price before they travel. This information is not currently provided on the network because, to remain impartial, TfWM would have to advertise all operator fares, which is too complex.

Customer information and infrastructure

15

Page 105

The presentation of the local bus network as a single system – and providing connections and co-ordination with other modes – is one of our greatest areas of opportunity to Inform, Reassure and Inspire”.



12,200 bus stops



13.6 stops per km sq (highest bus stop density in Europe)



1,400 real-time information (RTI) displays

We have had customer success through our £20m Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) for managing disruption communications and integration through consistent branding across bus, rail and metro and the provision of website information regarding multi-modal journeys. However, more needs to be done.

Our shelters have been designed to be “accessible for all” including wheelchair spaces, tactile paving and information being provided at the optimum height and size. These features were incorporated by working closely with our Equalities team and passenger groups.

The revamped TfWM website offers customers travel information for all operators. There is also consistent branding being rolled out across bus stop infrastructure. Three in four existing customers are satisfied with the available information at bus stops, on buses and Swift Go apps.

Beyond the website and bus stop infrastructure, customers can experience disjointed communication regarding functional information such as timetables and encounter different levels and types of information across the operators. Customers have noted difficulty in navigating the information provided at bus stations. Whilst some good improvements are underway delivering Better Journeys requires further change in the ease, access and simplicity of with which customers can access the right information, at the right time, which is a key proposal within this prospectus.

Our £2m Transforming RTI project is delivering a new “back office” functionality, via the integration of real time data feeds direct from bus operators and from the DfT Bus Open Data Service. This will create a platform on which we will be able to monitor the performance of buses in real time (supporting the operation of the RTCC), as well as using historic data to plan for the future and provide significantly improved information to customers.





Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is the overarching brand for public transport in the area encompassing the bus, tram and rail networks.

The TfWM branding ensures consistent messaging across the different modes of transport and improves customer experience by providing unmistakable, simple signage and creating smoother journeys. The TfWM brand was developed in order to promote a single integrated transport system.

output, underpin and develop our brand and significantly enhance the overall passenger experience.

There is a clear opportunity here to streamline the branding and communication across the West Midlands bus network to align one brand which will considerably increase the clarity and quality of information to the customer and improving perception of the Network, to feel like a whole system.



To ensure customer experience is at its best, it is imperative that branding is consistent and removes confusion to support easier and Better Journeys. While this does occur across the different modes of transport, the TfWM bus network branding is still having to exist alongside individual operator branding. Individual operators still have autonomy over their own branding and communications.

As a result, bus network communications are not provided from a centralised source and therefore the messages being provided can be diluted or lost, which can have a domino-effect on customer experience and satisfaction. The ambitions of Bus Back Better allow us to improve our information

We need to brand and promote the bus network more effectively, so there is much more intuitive understanding of the integrated nature of the public transport system (including ticketing/fare structures) serving the West Midlands, a transport network with the tiers of core, local and supporting bus, more specialised bus services, integrating with the backbone of Sprint Bus Rapid Transit, metro and rail – all joined up with clear roles to form one integrated network.

Branding provides a clear opportunity to remove confusion and build on a 'one network' vision which supports Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares across an integrated transport system.



Modern buses and decarbonisation

Page 109
WMCA has demonstrated a strong commitment to limit the impact of climate change, through #WM2041 which sets out our actions and the principles that underpin them. We have set a target for the West Midlands to be carbon neutral by 2041 – an ambitious target that will support the delivery of the Government's national target to be carbon neutral by 2050, while ensuring no-one is left behind. For bus decarbonisation we have already delivered, or committed to, the following:

- Coventry as the UK's first all-electric bus city by 2025, having already invested £125 million in new buses since 2015
- 29 electric double deck vehicles
- 20 hydrogen double deck vehicles operating on the first Sprint bus rapid transit route
- 5 re-powered electric buses for zero emission
- Bid to Government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme for more hydrogen buses
- UK's first publicly owned pantograph, offering easier access to charging for operators
- Established a procurement framework through to 2027, for the purchase of pantograph charging infrastructure, that is available to all public sector bodies
- Over 1,000 bus retrofits to Euro VI across 14 different local bus operators

The West Midlands bus fleet is currently 2,000 buses strong, with a mix of minibus, single deck and double deck vehicles operating local bus services. The average fleet age is 10 years. We are clear we need to take further action to limit the impact of climate change by investing in more zero emission buses and prepare for the changes we cannot prevent.



West Midlands Bus Alliance

Customer Charter

**Our promise is built on trust.
You can rely on us to do the
following things.**

FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE

Our staff will be approachable and knowledgeable making it easy for you to talk to us. We will take responsibility for solving problems you may have - always asking ourselves have we done everything we can.

WE ARE LISTENING

We welcome your feedback and actively consult local people before making major changes. We will improve our services where we can, creating opportunities for our customers voice to be heard.

WE ARE INFORMATIVE

We will tell you in advance when services are planned to change. We will keep websites, timetables and other important sources of information updated so that information is accurate and available when you need it.

WE ARE HONEST

Things sometimes go wrong and if they do we will try to resolve them and put them right. We will be honest about things we can't directly control and always try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

We are a member of the West Midlands Bus Alliance, committed to working with others to deliver the best possible experience to our customers across the bus network in the West Midlands.

ACROSS OUR NETWORK

HIGH QUALITY

The best possible experience for customers before, during and after your journey.

SAFE

An environment where you feel safe and secure.

RELIABLE

Services that you can trust to get you to where you need to be.

CLEANER

Buses, bus stations and stops that are well looked after and pleasant to use.

GREEN

Committed to improving the region in which we live, reducing bus vehicle emissions and improving air quality and health.

ACCESSIBLE

Services and facilities that provide inclusive travel for all.

The WMCA has a long-standing commitment and passion for promoting customer safety and ensuring that the voice of bus passengers across the West Midlands is not only heard but actively listened to.

This is demonstrated through the West Midlands Bus Alliance Customer Charter. The Charter, published in 2019, commits operators in the region to deliver a high quality, safe, reliable, cleaner, green and accessible local bus network. Not only this, but it ensures that Bus Alliance partners will act, through a responsible, honest, listening, and informative approach to our customers.

Our existing Charter provides clear evidence of WMCA's commitment to giving bus passengers a voice. However, the West Midlands Bus Alliance is continually looking for ways to prioritise the customer and keep them central to our service.

Disability Awareness Training Programmes are deployed by bus operators in the West Midlands. To further enhance this training, TfWM have worked with NX to develop a training DVD for drivers that highlights experiences from a range of individuals with different disabilities in order to help drivers better understand how they can support customers with different needs when using the bus network.



The West Midlands has one of the safest public transport networks in the UK and the crime rate on the bus has seen a downward trend over the last decade of over 60%. The Autumn 2019 Transport Focus survey reported that 77% of respondents were satisfied with their level of personal safety while on the bus. Although these metrics are positive, there is always room for improvement as the safety of our customers is of paramount importance to us.

The value of passengers feeling safe cannot be underestimated. DfT figures suggest there would be 11.5% more public transport journeys made if passengers felt safer, which for the West Midlands would equate to an increase of 30 million journeys, helping reduce congestion and keep people moving.

TfWM and local bus operators have been proactive in addressing customer safety in partnership with the West Midlands Police and British Transport Police through the Safer Travel Plan, which introduced measures focusing on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport across the region. The overall objectives of the Safer Travel Plan are to:

- **Increase customer trust and confidence** in the Safer Travel Police through improved engagement ensuring that information is published about progress to address passenger concerns.
- **Continue to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and offending** by using long-term problem-solving methods and by tackling anti-social behaviour and low-level nuisance, taking every opportunity to involve and communicate with passengers.
- **Improve passenger satisfaction in services** by listening to passengers and dealing with the issues that matter most.

- **Support repeat victims of crime** through a multi-agency safeguarding approach focusing on the Threat, Risk and Harm to those individuals
- **Increase the understanding of passengers' needs and concerns** by listening to and working with passengers to identify needs and understand how partner agencies can continually improve services
- **Keep passengers informed about policing on public transport** by keeping passengers informed about the work that is going on in local areas that affect local communities, listening to views and learning from them.

To date the partnership has successfully seen an 11% reduction in sexual offences and robberies on buses as well as reductions in theft and criminal damage. The partnership also has a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team and currently runs a 'See Something Say Something' campaign where anonymous witnesses can report crime and nuisance behaviour on the bus network. In July 2021, two WMCA leaders were chosen by Government to lead on efforts to tackle violence against women and girls on transport. WMCA interim chief executive Laura Shoaf and TfWM interim managing director Anne Shaw are a part of the UK's first Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champions.

We have identified the critical challenges in terms of decarbonisation, congestion on a complex network and complicated ticketing. We want to tackle these and other challenges to deliver Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better fares. Only by doing this will we meet the long-term travel demands of passengers and increase patronage.

Through the strong Bus Alliance, we were beginning to achieve increases in bus patronage to address the years of decline (falling by 2% year-on-year in the 10 years) before the pandemic hit in 2019/20. Notwithstanding these positive changes, we have seen changing behaviour patterns (preferences to travel by car), increasing cost of bus fares relative to motoring costs, and declining service coverage (in part because of declining bus speeds) impact bus boardings.

Key external challenges impacting bus:



A growing reliance on car travel – resulting in congestion and slower bus speeds



Land-use changes leading to journeys being more dispersed



Accessibility and equality barriers

Growing reliance on cars

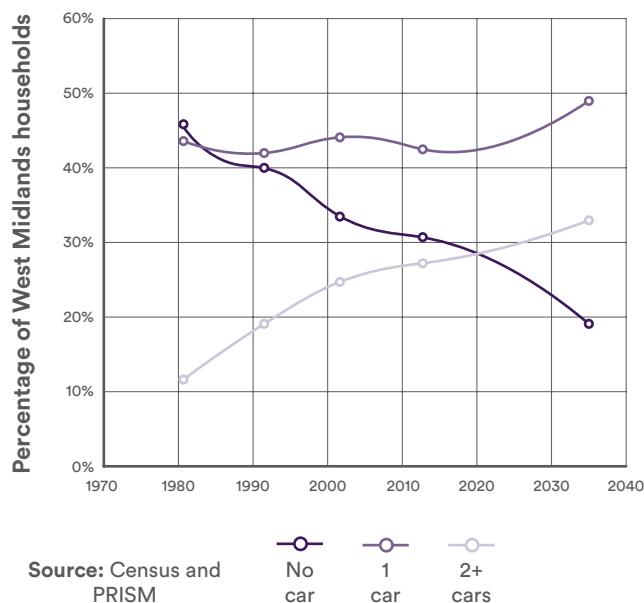
Despite our region's efforts to invest in sustainable transport alternatives, car mileage has significantly increased (by 6 billion miles) across the West Midlands over the last 25 years. The reliance on car travel not only results in congestion, poor air quality and negative consequences for our environment, but also contributes to declining health outcomes more broadly in the region by reducing the share of walking, cycling and public transport. A preference for private vehicles over public transport is one of the key barriers for bus in the region.



Increased car ownership and usage

Car ownership has vastly increased, with the West Midlands being one of the highest regions for car ownership in England.

Without the significant investment proposed in our public transport network (starting with bus) and our ambitious measures to promote behavioural change and targeted measures aimed at managing demand, these historic trends are set to increase over the next 20 years.



Car ownership has also been growing quickly among older women.

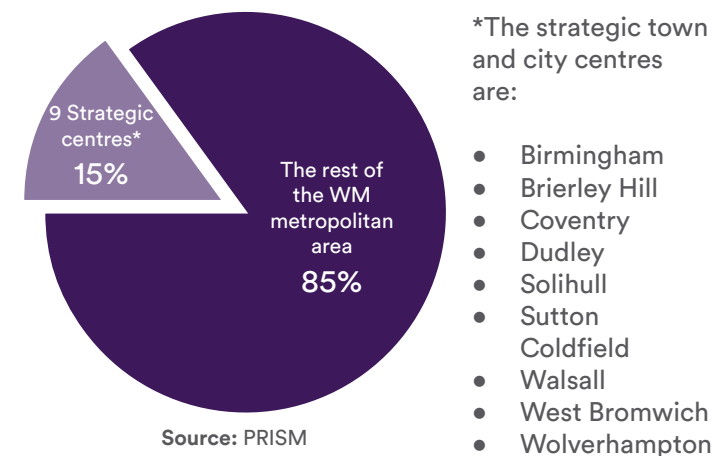
Only a quarter of women over 70 had a licence twenty years ago, but more than half did in 2020 and this is likely to be at 80% by 2030. These trends contribute to the reduction in bus travel by (older) concessions, despite larger numbers projected to become eligible for the benefit.

Continued long-term trends towards greater car ownership contribute to a reduction in bus demand and revenue which, combined with real increases in bus operating costs, ultimately result in either a smaller bus network and/or requiring significant increases in public sector funding for bus services.

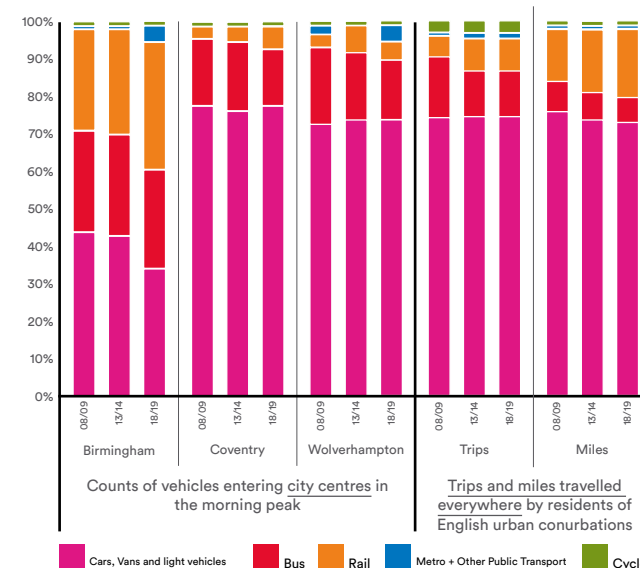
Local people feel they are heavily reliant on their car with 94% saying they enjoy the independence car ownership gives to them and 87% claiming their current lifestyle requires them to own a car or van. This demonstrates the extent to which the scale and intensity of car ownership has become embedded in people's lives and perceptions of travel.

While public transport is a popular choice for accessing our strategic centres, private car is by far the most popular choice for travel across the wider region. Most travel is not to or from our centres, even in the peak travel periods.

Destinations of car trips made in the morning peak



Comparing mode shares to/from centres with mode share for all travel



Lower cost of car use and parking

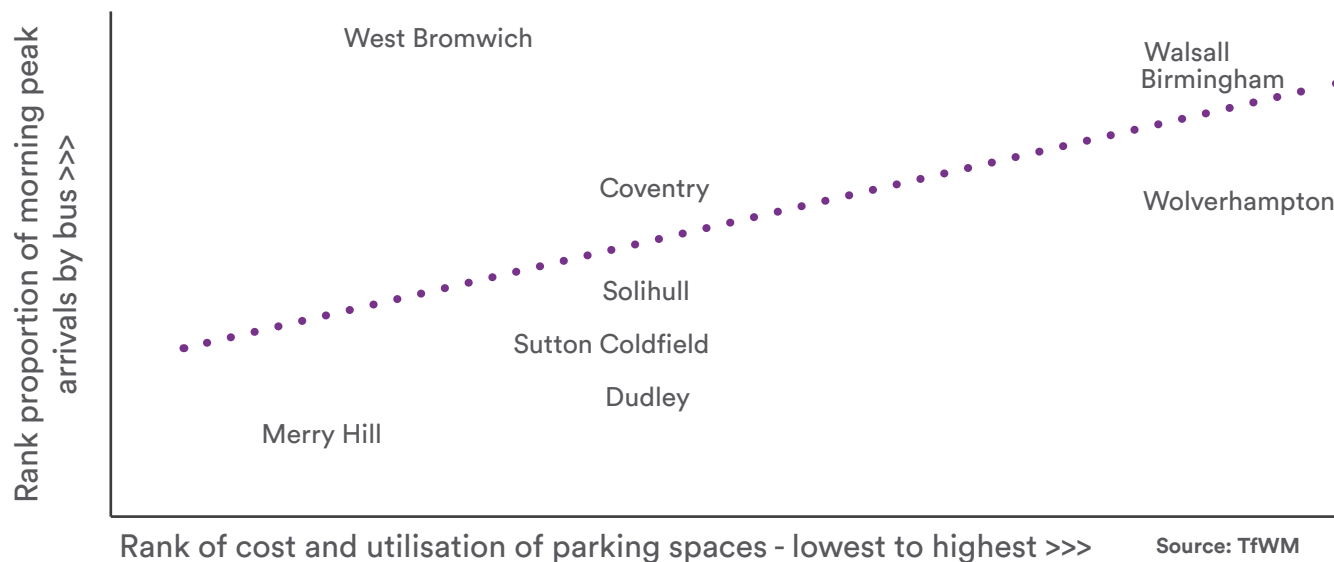
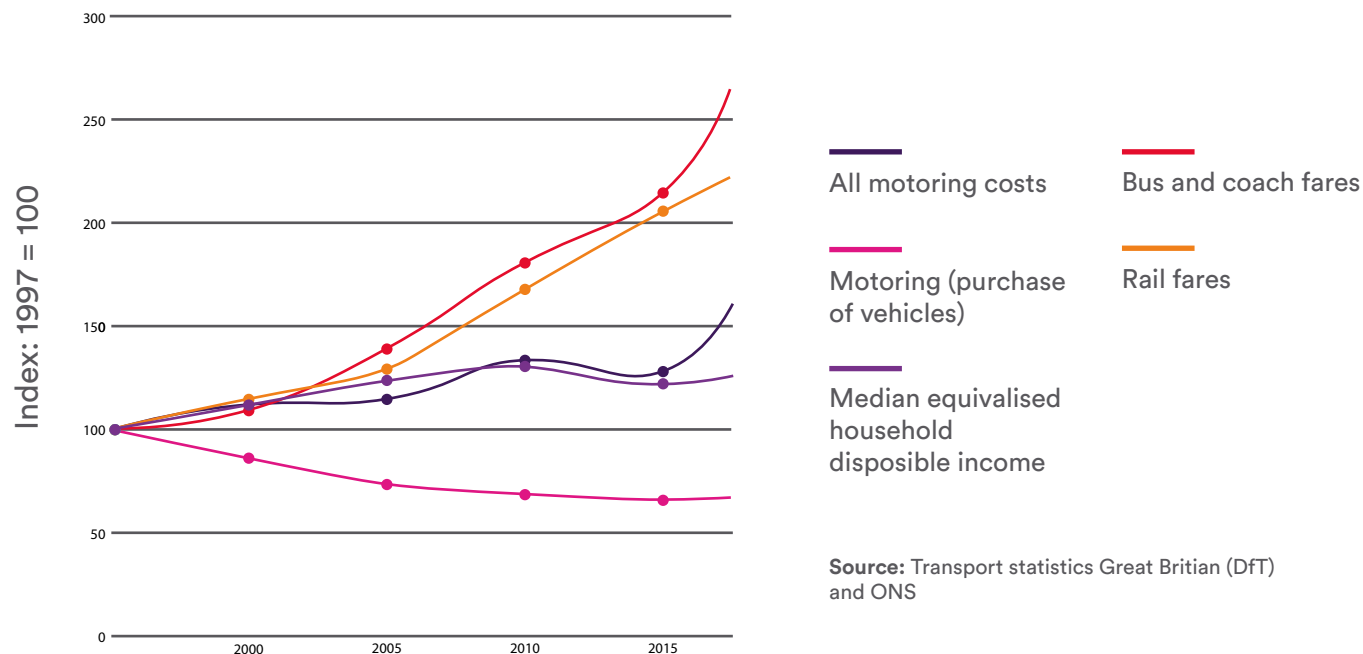
22

On both a regional and national scale bus fares have dramatically increased compared to motoring costs which have remained comparatively level with the median household disposable income. This has resulted in public transport being viewed as the 'more expensive' way to travel compared to driving in the region.

Parking costs can also aggravate this issue, with free car parking compounding the perceived cost effectiveness of driving, leading to fewer people opting for public transport.

Birmingham's recently adopted Transport Plan acknowledges the need to reduce the reliance on cars, and that this will also reduce the demand for car parking. The Transport Plan includes travel demand measures to steer how people choose to travel more sustainably.

Parking will be used to manage demand for travel by car through availability, pricing and restrictions. We know local centres with strong parking controls promote higher bus use.



Congestion leading to declining bus speeds

The increase in private car trips and high levels of on-street parking has led to increased congestion on our roads, and a long-term trend of slowing bus journeys and reduced reliability, further pushing up bus operating costs that in some instances leads to a reduction in service provision to passengers.

Page 113

216,000 fewer people are within a 45 minute bus journey time of Birmingham city centre compared to 2008 because of congestion.

Birmingham Bus Survey, 2019 showed:

80%

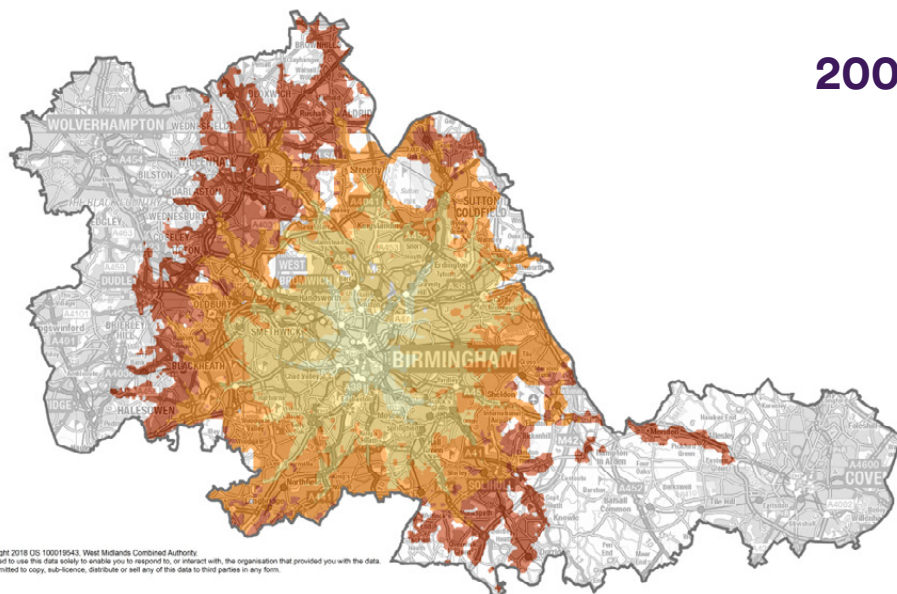
strongly agreed or agreed that bus journeys take too long.

78%

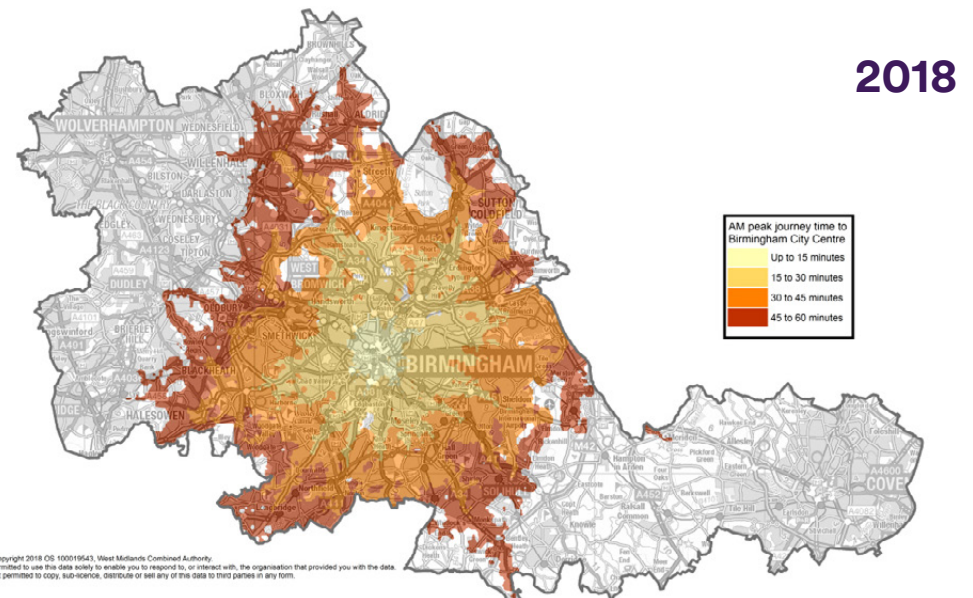
strongly agreed or agreed that they preferred to travel in another way.

73%

strongly agreed or agreed that bus services are unreliable.



© Crown copyright 2018 OS 100019543. West Midlands Combined Authority.
You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data.
You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.



AM peak journey time to
Birmingham City Centre

- Up to 15 minutes
- 15 to 30 minutes
- 30 to 45 minutes
- 45 to 60 minutes

© Crown copyright 2018 OS 100019543. West Midlands Combined Authority.
You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data.
You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Land-use changes

Changes in land use and the segregation of services have led to journeys being more dispersed. As a result, people have increasingly turned to their cars as these destinations may not be well-served by bus. Examples of this can be seen in the rise of out-of-town supermarkets and shopping centres with large, often free, car parks and limited or no bus.

Without investment to strengthen and expand our bus network, car use will become increasingly entrenched part of people's lives making it difficult to then create a behavioural shift towards sustainable transport choices.

Accessibility and equality barriers

24

For some members of society accessing public transport is extremely challenging, and it is often those who heavily rely on public transport who are most affected by accessibility barriers. A national report¹ has shown that funding reductions, and the prioritisation of car and train over bus, has also led to increasing inaccessibility with fewer people able to reach essential services, employment, education and social interaction.

Within the West Midlands one in five disabled people have reported facing a significant barrier in accessing public transport as a result of their condition. Women, single parents, care leavers, children, those on low income, unemployed and young adults can also often feel excluded from public transport due to accessibility issues. Physical, emotional financial and digital barriers must all be considered, as accessibility issues are unique for every individual.

The Equality Act 2010 covers certain protected characteristics and ensures that they are not discriminated against. However, for some, fear of discrimination can be a major hinderance for using public transport. Ensuring no individual feels uncomfortable or scared to use the bus system due to their personal characteristics is something that must be addressed.

Demographics of a bus user

78%

are from white ethnic backgrounds

21%

black and minority ethnic backgrounds

61%

are female

39%

students

53%

live in a household without a car

37%

of 16-18 year olds are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds

Bus users typically from a family with children who struggle to make ends meet or elderly people who mostly live alone in social or private housing.

1) DfT's Inclusive Transport Strategy: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-transport-strategy>

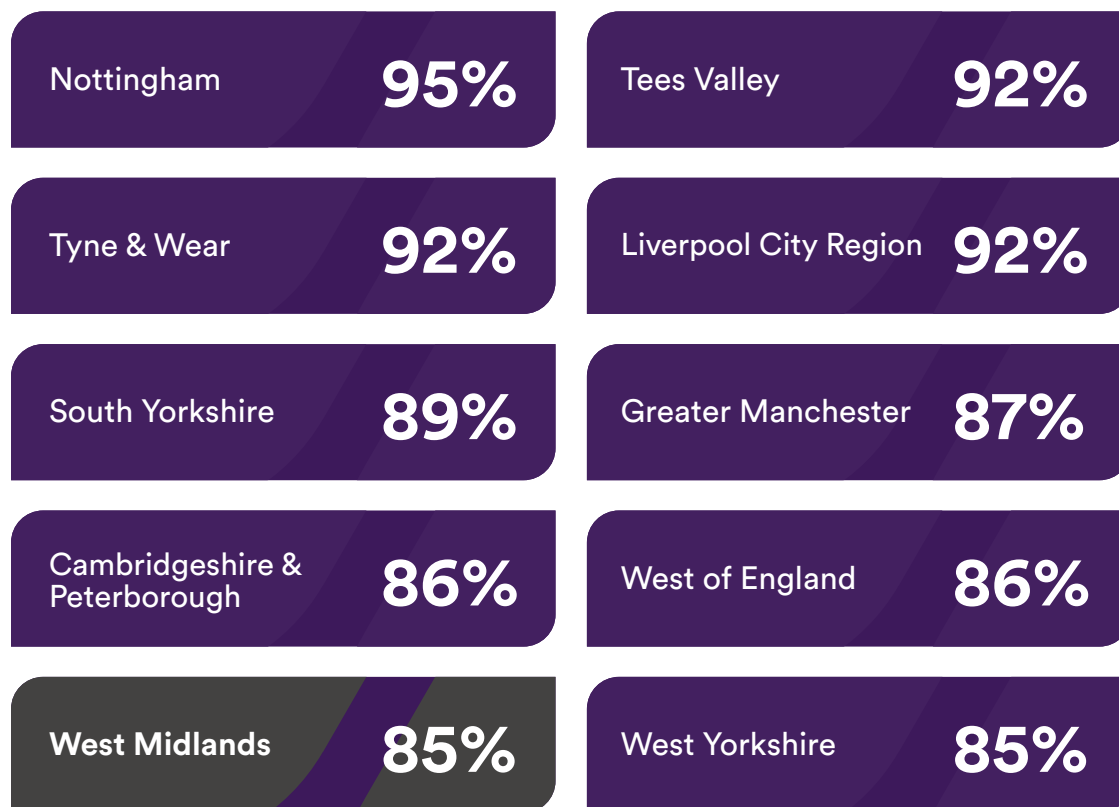
2) WMCA (2020) Equalities Impact Assessment Work / ONS Data

Customer perceptions

Page 115

Overall customer satisfaction with bus in the West Midlands is 85%. With so many people within the West Midlands relying on the bus network, and a major aspect of our new LTP being to shift people's travel behaviours to more sustainable modes, the BSIP offers huge scope to make the necessary changes and improvements to our bus services to both retain and enhance bus patronage and passenger satisfaction levels. Our BSIP aims to compare our region against the highest levels of customer satisfaction and capitalise on the opportunity to deliver Better Buses, create Better Journeys and have Better Fares to make bold targets for, and improve customer satisfaction.

West Midlands v other areas



De-mystifying the bus network passenger survey, 2018 showed:

- That during the ticket purchase process, they were **unsure of which ticket type they needed, how much the tickets cost and how to pay** for the ticket.
- **Uncomfortable during the ticket purchase process on the bus**, for fear of holding up the queue of people boarding the bus by asking the driver questions and not being able to hear the bus driver's response through the security panel.
- That they don't have a good understanding of bus routes and timings, due to a **lack of full information, or inconsistent information with a lack of clarity on a confusing network**.
- Walking and cycling were potentially faster and cheaper travel options when there was **traffic congestion**.
- **Unsure of where to alight the bus** when approaching their destination.
- **Personal safety concerns** whilst waiting on or using bus services.
- Perceived **attitudes and driving styles of bus drivers** as reasons for not using the bus.
- Private cars (and in some cases taxis) perceived as being more convenient

Acknowledging the uncertainty in the long term

This BSIP comes at a time of significant uncertainty in local transport. We face all the changes and challenges for bus previously described, but also must look ahead to anticipate the impacts of new technologies, like automation and electrification, the impacts of new ways of working, and of paying for and sharing mobility.

Future economic, environmental and social challenges are not confined to bus or transport in general. How other sectors deal with these may have as much effect on the demand for travel, and cost of providing it, as any actions within the transport system. Meanwhile we continue to deal with the uncertainty of Covid-19 recovery – a major theme of Bus Back Better.

Our emerging LTP will set out the needs of all our modes to support an integrated transport system. As an integrated and funded bus investment programme we are confident that we will meet the ambitions for passenger demand recovery set out in the National Bus Strategy. Further, we are acutely aware that if the future proves more challenging at first, our planned improvements will be vital in maintaining an attractive and sustainable offer for bus travel.



How we have developed our BSIP collaboratively

The West Midlands BSIP has been developed in collaboration with local bus operators, local highway authorities and other relevant stakeholders including Transport Focus and Bus Users UK under our existing West Midlands Bus Alliance. Engagement has been held with neighbouring local transport authorities, including Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Telford & Wrekin to ensure synergies for cross-boundary bus services due to the vast geographical converge of West Midlands bus services.

Page 117

7

Passenger Engagement and Surveys	Development	West Midlands Bus Alliance	Governance
Transport focus bus passenger survey 2014 - 2019	Transport for West Midlands (Lead)	West Midlands Bus Alliance Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport Focus (Independent Chair)• TfWM• Local Bus Operators• Confederation of Passenger Transport• Bus Users UK• Safer Travel Partnership• Members of Constituent Authorities	WMCA Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor of the West Midlands• Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Constituent Authorities
De-mystifying the bus engagement survey, 2018			
Birmingham Bus Survey 2020	Local Bus Operations	West Midlands EP/BSIP Reference Group <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus Users UK (Independent Chair)• TfWM• Local Bus Operators• Confederation of Passenger Transport• Transport Focus• Officers from Constituent Authorities• Officers from Neighbouring Authorities	WMCA Strategic Transport Board <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portfolio Lead for Transport• Cabinet Members of Constituent Authorities
All Traveller Segmentation Study – Bus Network Analysis, 2020			
Public Perceptions of bus, rail journey time, 2020	Constituent Authorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birmingham City Council• Coventry City Council• Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council• Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council• Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council• Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council• City of Wolverhampton		WMCA Transport Delivery Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members of Constituent Authorities
Enhanced Partnership public consultation 2020			
WMCA/TfWM Covid travel trends & behaviours surveys, 2020 & 2021	Neighbouring Local Transport Authorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Warwickshire County Council• Staffordshire County Council• Worcestershire County Council• Shropshire County Council• Telford & Wrekin Council• Stoke-on-Trent City Council	Bus Passenger Satisfaction Group	Strategic Transport Officers Group <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constituent Authorities• TfWM
Transport Focus Survey - The Route ahead: getting passengers back on busses, 2021			

Part B: Our Objectives and Targets

28

How we are addressing the challenges we face

Page 118

The previous section set out the biggest current challenges facing bus in the West Midlands. We intend to address these by:

- Alleviating congestion which is slowing buses across the region and restricting access to economic opportunities
- Evolving the network to support existing, new and developing economic hubs
- Allowing passengers to seamlessly travel between bus operators and other modes for the lowest 'capped' fare
- Evolving a bus network that takes advantage of new technology to meet the needs of young people and adults
- Transitioning to a zero-emission bus fleet by 2030, to be at the forefront of the response to the climate change crisis
- Making sure that the bus passenger receives excellent customer service and remains safe, and the network is perceived as safe
- Providing a customer centric approach to service delivery, passenger charter, and a transformation in customer information, digital or paper

We are already working at pace to tackle some of these challenges, including:

- Working to deliver the UK's first all-electric bus city in Coventry, after investing £125m in new buses since 2015 to improve bus emissions standards and delivering the largest bus retrofit programme in England (outside of London)
- Making bus journeys quicker with £40m to tackle congestion hotspots across the bus network and £88m in the region's first Sprint Bus Rapid Transit route
- A Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC), providing a unified and single view of the transport network to keep the West Midlands moving
- Quicker and easier access to bus with Swift, revolutionising our fares and payment function with contactless payment on all buses and daily, 3-day and 7-day fares capping
- Cheaper bus journeys as the only MCA region to cut fares in July 2021, with the cheapest fares in England and prices back to 2013 levels. New low fares zones introduced saving people 35 per cent on a standard regional day ticket, half price travel for all apprentices and trainees under 19 and £1 pre-9.30am travel for concessionary pass holders
- Safer travel by continuing the Safer Travel Partnership, with a dedicated Police Team that has seen criminal damage on the bus network reduce by 25 per cent as well as the introduction of 'bus byelaws' to tackle anti-social behaviour on the bus network

We must and want to do more. This BSIP sets out our further plans, for Better Buses with more zero emission buses, Better Journeys by connecting thousands more people to new opportunities by speeding up and integrating buses across the region and Better Fares with lower and simpler fares.

Key objectives for our BSIP

29

We have drawn all the challenges and opportunities discussed into four objectives, that have informed the development of our BSIP - Better Buses, Better Journeys, Better Fares. They reflect the NBS, VfB and LTP 'Motives for Change'.

A More sustainable and attractive service offer, including to motorists (Better Journeys, Better Fares)

- to retain, regain and attract new trips; via a stable, legible, better-integrated network, at optimal frequencies for the entire day and week, with excellent value cross-operator/mode ticketing

B Consistent, good delivery of the service offer (Better Journeys)

- reliably faster, and more punctual services, via more and better bus priority, with improved arrangements for performance and network management

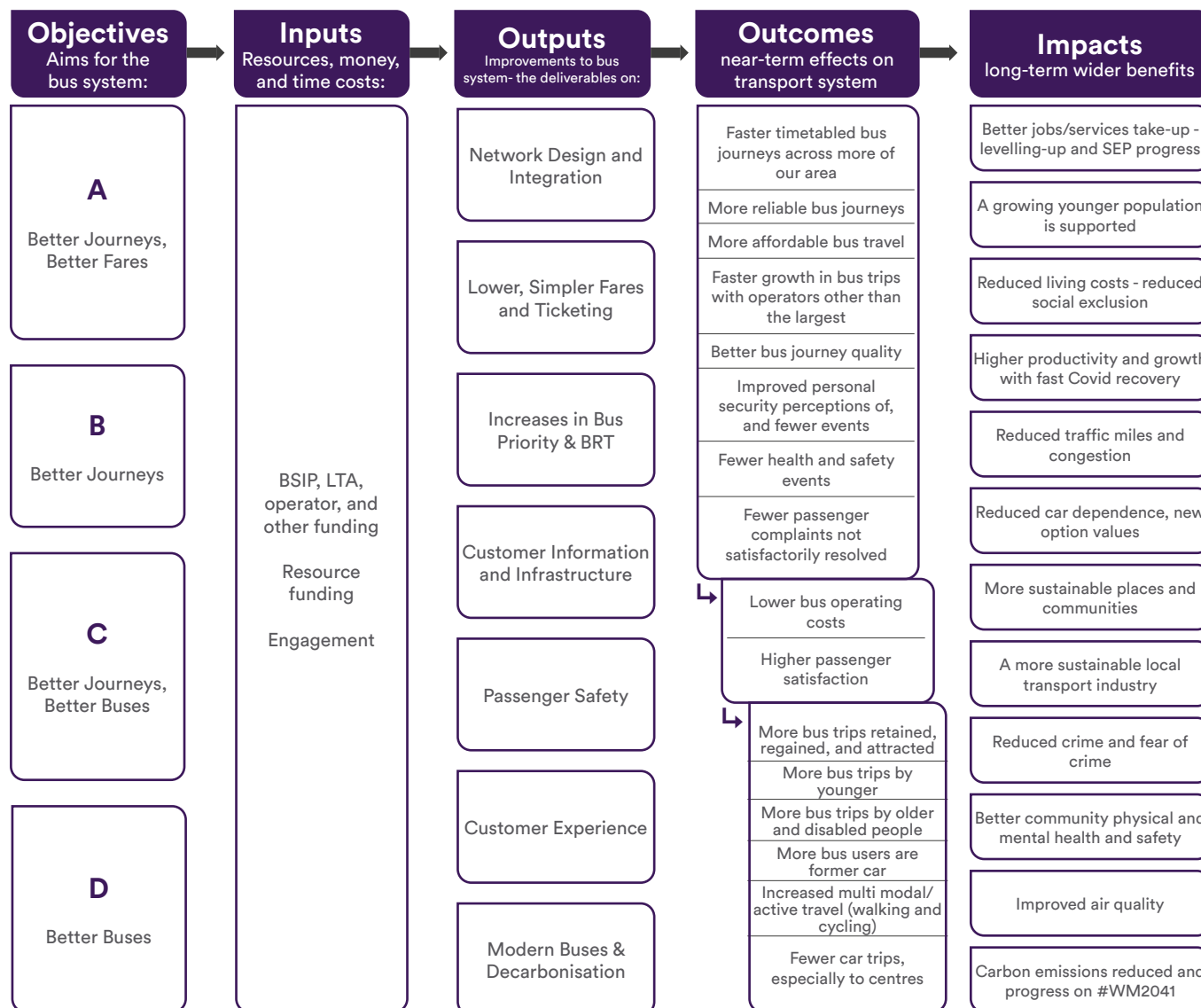
C Ensuring a good passenger experience for all (Better Journeys, Better Buses)

- raising passenger satisfaction, with marketable improvements to; vehicles and facilities, branding and information and safety and personal security – with a whole-system passenger charter to ensure these standards are met

D Reducing environmental impacts (Better Buses)

- cutting carbon, and the other emissions that worsen air quality and damage health, with a move to zero emission buses









A logic map (Appendix) that is summarised below links these objectives to the ultimate positive long-term impacts for our region. It also shows the shorter-term outcomes for the transport system which form the basis for our BSIP investment programme – the deliverable outputs are described in Part C with outputs linked to our six CRSTS investment themes.



Targets and Monitoring

30

We will monitor those outcomes shown using the targets in the table below – which, in addition to the four mandatory NBS areas, include targets in four additional areas linked most closely to local challenges with our current bus offer.

Target Area	To monitor outcomes	Headline target	Baseline, either of		Target years		Outputs contributing most to outcomes monitored by headline targets	
			19/20	20/21	24/25	29/30		
 1. Passenger numbers and growth (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster growth in trips with operators other than largest More bus trips retained, regained, attracted, and by younger people, and older and disabled people 	Growth in boardings (millions) overall	248		268	295	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Lower & Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing Increases in Bus Priority & BRT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Information & Infrastructure Passenger Safety Customer Experience Modern Buses & Decarbonisation
 2. Journey time and network access (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster timetabled bus journeys across more of our area 	Bus speeds kph (MF 0700-1100), network overall Bus speeds kph (MF 0700-1100), strategic centres		16.8	+2.5%	+6.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Increases in Bus Priority & BRT 	
				15.7 to 18.4	+4.0% to +1.0%	+8.0% to +4.0%		
 3. Reliability improvements (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More reliable journeys 	Punctuality (MF 0700-1100), network overall Punctuality (MF 0700-1100), each strategic centre	85%		95%	>95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in Bus Priority & BRT 	
			80% to 89%		95%	>95%		
 4. Average passenger satisfaction (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better journey quality Fewer complaints not resolved Higher satisfaction (for all, and older, younger, and disabled people) 	Average passenger satisfaction with service overall		85%	89%	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Lower & Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Customer Information & Infrastructure Passenger Safety Customer Experience Modern Buses & Decarbonisation 	
 5. Affordability (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More affordable travel 	Average fare p/km (in baseline prices)	23.2p		22.5p	21.4p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower & Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing 	
 6. Safety and personal security (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved personal security perceptions, and fewer events Fewer health and safety (H&S) events 	Slips, trips, & falls per million boards (five-year average) Crime rate per million boards	0.14		0.13	0.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger Safety 	
				26	18	8		
 7. Carbon and other bus emissions (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced emissions from bus Lower bus operating costs 	Annual GHG saving (ktCO2e) over diesel buses		5	60	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Modern Buses & Decarbonisation 	
 8. Mode shift (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More passengers former car users Increased multi-modal/active travel Fewer car trips, esp. to centres 	Car mode share to strategic centres	68%		66%	61%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Lower & Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Customer Information & Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passenger Safety Customer Experience Modern Buses & Decarbonisation

Part C: Our Proposals for Improvement

31

Proposed Investment Programme to 2025

Page 121



Network design and integration

- Provide a stable network to welcome the world to the Commonwealth Games
- Sustain and enhance frequencies on over 110 services
- New cross-city and cross-regional 'levelling up' core network, connecting all parts of our region to jobs and growth, giving 40% of passengers direct links to more places



Increases in bus priority and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

- Trebling the amount of bus priority, providing £700m of economic benefits
- 106km of new bus lanes providing a foundation for our Sprint BRT network



Lower, simpler fares and integrated ticketing

- Keeping England's cheapest bus fares, already reduced in July 2021
- Thousands of ticket variants down to just six
- Capped fares and lower fares with £4 day fare
- Passenger Incentive Programme to target 500,000 people with bespoke offers



Modern buses and decarbonisation

- 750 additional zero emission buses by 2025
- More electric and hydrogen buses
- Fastest city region to fully zero emission fleet by 2030



Customer information and infrastructure

- Local network presented as a single integrated system
- Completed roll out of West Midlands Bus branding
- Real Time Information screens or virtual RTI at every stop



Customer experience

- Single Bus Passenger Charter for the region
- Giving passengers a stronger voice
- Enhanced driving training programmes



Passenger safety

- Targeted campaigns to reduce offences, particularly for women and young people
- New CCTV at key locations for enhanced staff and public safety
- Increased presence and patrols on the network



Longer-term transformation of the bus network

- Continue to explore complementary measures to support bus network growth
- Investigate further enhancements based on global best practice for a better single integrated transport system

We Will:

Maintain a stable bus network in the lead up to and during the 2022 Commonwealth Games

Deliver enhanced frequencies on over 110 services to support better customer accessibility and provide passenger growth

Significantly expand the new cross-city and cross-regional network of bus services supporting over half a million people to new journey opportunities, connecting communities, and better integration with metro and rail

Set minimum service levels and review our network in full from October 2022 after the Commonwealth Games

Invest in a package of new additional Demand Responsive Transport services to feed an integrated bus, metro and rail network

The West Midlands Bus Alliance aims to connect every resident to every job in the region within 90 minutes by public transport by 2030 working with the Metro and Rail Alliances

CRSTS investment themes:

- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities
- Supporting inclusive growth

The West Midlands Bus Alliance will deliver an enhanced bus network that provides connections that people need for better access to life changing opportunities and essential services including existing and future skills, jobs, retail and leisure.

We will achieve this by defining and delivering a core network of turn up and go services with enhanced frequencies which is easy for passengers to understand and navigate. This core network will be fed by a network of local and supporting services.

The core network will build on the delivery of cross city services, to link bus services to all parts of our central areas as well as the surrounding suburbs. These cross-city and cross-region services will significantly increase the number of people with direct cross-regional links to more places, and improved connection to metro and rail.

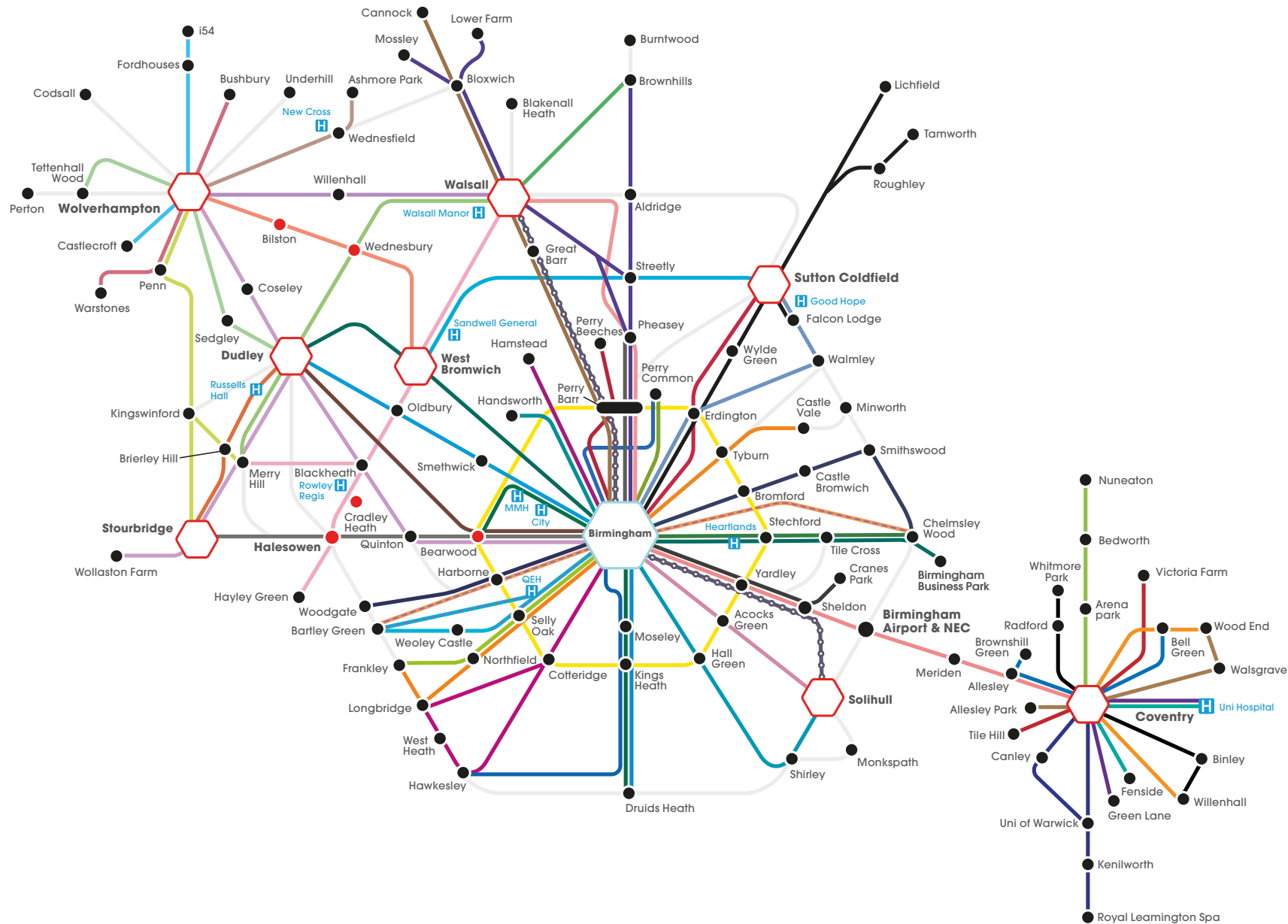
The network will be numbered to remove any duplication of service numbers in local areas to provide greater clarity for passengers.

The core network will be supported with comprehensive bus priority measures, improved waiting facilities, branding, information and integrated ticketing. It is envisaged this investment coupled with the stated frequency levels will give this core network the best chance to be commercially viable in the medium term.



West Midlands Core Network

Page 123



The bus network has been designed around key principles of guaranteed service levels at different times of day including enhancements during the evenings and weekends, across different categories of the core network, and the local and supported network.

Monday to Saturday

- 12 to 15 mins between 0500 to 0700
- 8 to 10 mins between 0700 and 1830
- 12 to 15 mins between 1830 and 2330

Sunday

- 15 mins 0630 to 0830
- 10 to 12 mins 0830 to 1700
- 15 mins 1700 to 2200

POTENTIAL CORE NETWORK SERVICE LEVELS BY DAY AND TIME

Monday to Saturday

- 15 to 30 mins between 0630 to 0800
- 10 to 20 mins between 0800 and 1830
- 15 to 30 mins between 1830 and 2300

Sunday

- 60 mins 0700 to 0900
- 15 to 30 mins 0900 to 1700
- 60 mins 1700 to 2200

POTENTIAL LOCAL NETWORK SERVICE LEVELS BY DAY AND TIME

Having maintained a stable network for the Commonwealth Games in July 2022 when the eyes of the World will be on the region, we will undertake a review of the entire network to deliver these principles with operators and other partners. This network will provide the foundation on which we can build to deliver the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

The network will be delivered in partnership with and between operators to ensure that resource levels are appropriate for the level of demand and to enhance service provision and prevent scaling back to only the most commercial routes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant there are a greater number of services that are no longer commercially viable but that will be essential in delivering our aspirations and those of the National Bus Strategy. There will need to be more services supported by TfWM through the BSIP to deliver these aspirations. TfWM will seek to adopt registrations powers for bus services in the region and explore other options within our Enhanced Partnership to prevent any reduction of the network.

We will deliver a bus network which is better integrated with other modes, including walking, cycling, metro and local rail, to provide seamless and reliable travel choices.

This will include physical integration at key interchanges as well as ensuring that buses meet the times of trams and trains and most significantly, the first and last journeys. This will encourage seamless interchange between bus and other modes and seek to solve the first / last mile conundrum.

Points of interchange will be designed for customer ease to move seamlessly between active and sustainable travel modes, supporting the Bus Alliance objective to connect every resident with every job in the region within 90 minutes by public transport.

We will work to ensure that service changes are minimised and coordinated such that passengers can build their trust and journey patterns around a stable multi-modal network.

Network Design and Integration

Demand Responsive and Community Transport

We will continue to trial new and innovative forms of public transport underpinning a multi-modal transport system.

Demand responsive transport services, incorporating Ring & Ride and other Community Transport services, will provide feeder services into the core bus and fixed metro and rail networks.

Community Transport operators are an active part of the Bus Alliance and provide a number of specialist services to support people with specific requirements and to meet a very local need. We will seek to give Community Transport services a mainstream identity within the wider bus network.

Cross Boundary Services

The towns and cities of the West Midlands are destinations for many journeys starting outside of the transport authority's boundaries, and the opposite is also true. In establishing this BSIP we have engaged with our local neighbouring authority partners to understand how our respective BSIPs come together and

support each other. We will continue with this engagement as we collectively finalise our network and go forward to ensure that any network aspirations provide continuity across boundaries and do not stop at any administrative borders.

Bus Performance and Reliability

Bus performance and service reliability is a big driver of customer satisfaction and use. Currently services are managed independently by individual operators and with differing results, even on corridors where operators run together and sometimes in partnership.

Through our BSIP (and supported by the EP) we need to coordinate this network management by bringing together operators and local highway authorities to ensure headways are managed and network resilience is maintained across the network and between operators. We will look at protecting the core network from unplanned disruption to ensure reliable services. We propose to implement and coordinate technologies and people into a single system to work alongside the already established Regional Transport Coordination Centre to achieve this.



We Will:

Page 126

Introduce an additional 106km of bus lanes across the region. This will provide the foundation for our BRT plans.

Provide an additional £700m in economic benefits through the delivery of bus priority and better connecting our communities and towns across the region.

Develop a wider bus priority programme across the region ready for delivery beyond 2025 to further speed up buses and make them more reliable and dependable.

Buses will be given greater priority through a step-change in investment and road space re-allocation to ensure bus priority infrastructure and the network supports the anticipated scale and shape of growth across the region.

Our BSIP proposes a 200 per cent increase in the length of bus lanes, with 106km of new bus lanes up to 2025;

- **Birmingham City Centre – Northfield – Longbridge (2023) / BCR 4.4**
- **Birmingham City Centre – Sutton Coldfield (2023) / BCR 2.0**
- **Perry Common / Hamstead – Hawkesley / Longbridge (2024) / BCR 2.5**
- **Harborne – Castle Bromwich (2024) / BCR 3.1**
- **West Bromwich – East Birmingham (2024) / BCR 1.5**
- **Birmingham City Centre – Halesowen (2025) / BCR 2.5**
- **Outer Circle (2025) / BCR 1.6**

We will provide Better Journeys through the expansion of more bus priority across the region to speed up buses and improve reliability on more services as part of the core network.

The network for greater bus priority, through more bus lanes where there is congestion and space along high frequency routes, will provide the foundation for a larger bus rapid transit network in the future.

We will integrate delivery with our Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans (LCWIP) where complementary and improve physical access to inaccessible transport interchanges (e.g. Olton Station).

We will also continue to plan and develop more bus priority measures across the West Midlands through our Bus Priority Development Programme. The programme will look at further solutions for the highway network to unlock bus from the vicious circle of congestion that negatively impacts the quality and efficiency of services including operating costs.

CRSTS investment themes:

- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities
- Supporting inclusive growth



Increases in bus priority and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Strengthening the KRN approach

The West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN) is a 605km network of key highways across the West Midlands, defined in consultation with constituent local authorities and neighbouring highway authorities. Our KRN is a diverse network serving a range of travel demands and functioning across a range of place types with different characteristics that carries more people on buses than cars on the KRN each day.

As we look forward, there is a need to take a strategic view on the competing pressures across the KRN corridors to deliver optimum solutions from a variety of road-based modes that will help us achieve the emerging LTP Green Paper outcomes, and national policy objectives for bus and active travel as well as decarbonisation of the transport system. The LTP will offer an opportunity to clearly define the role of the KRN, along with policies and measures to ensure that it is developed and well-managed.

Achieving a modal shift through our Sprint Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network

38

Sprint is our planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network that will offer a similar level of service and comfort to a tram. It will operate on the highway like a bus with a limited stop service and dedicated bus lanes on key corridors.

Sprint will enable greater accessibility and quicker, more reliable journey times, helping the region to increase productivity whilst decreasing congestion on the region's roads. It provides the opportunity to encourage a greater modal shift from private cars with its enhanced level of service and comfort. It will link residential and employment areas. It will also connect to HS2 and new tram extensions. Our first corridor – ready in time for the 2022 Commonwealth Games – will link Walsall with Birmingham, Solihull and Birmingham International Airport.



We Will:

Maintain the cheapest fares in England at £4 a day and £15 per week for adults; and £2 a day and £7.50 per week for children.

Radically simplify our ticket range moving from over 3,000 options to a structure of just 6 making it simpler than ever before and enabling prices to be displayed at over 12,200 bus stops for the first time ever.

Build on the amazing work we have already done with the delivery of 1 day, 3 day and weekly capping to enable those using their bank card across multi-operator services to achieve the same capping benefits.

CRSTS investment themes:

- Making behaviour change easy
- Connecting our places
- Supporting inclusive growth

TfWM and its partner bus operators will deliver a revolution in its fares and ticketing. This will be delivered through simpler, easier and cheaper fares, targeted incentives, that will set the West Midlands above all other areas in the UK in terms of access to, and payment for public transport.

Simpler

We will replace the thousands of ticket options with a streamlined and cheaper set of just 6 ticket types that will be accepted on all operators' services with aligned pricing. This will include single, day and season tickets making it much easier for customers to understand which ticket offers them best value.

For the first time, TfWM and its partners will be able to promote the price of tickets throughout all its retail channels. This will remove the information barrier that restricts usage.

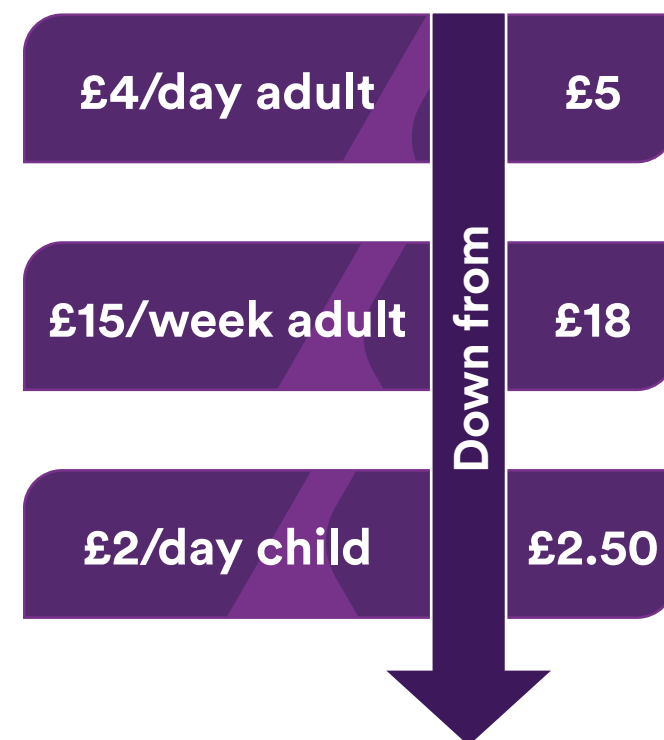
Easier

We will make it easier than ever before to pay for bus travel. We will deliver a contactless solution so that customers can achieve a best value cap when using their bank card across operators' services.

TfWM will also continue to develop and promote its Swift Go solution which will become a vital component of its passenger incentive programme.

Cheaper

The interventions will change fares and ticketing in the West Midlands. Customers will be able to use their tickets on all operators' service at no added cost.





Lower, simpler fares and integrated ticketing

40

Retail Proposal

Ticket retailing will be aligned to ensure both consistency and efficiency. TfWM, in partnership with local bus operators, will take over the retail network to ensure that customers can access the tickets they need, where and when they need them. This will see a hybrid of physical and digital channels that are customer optimised and efficient to also ensure value for money for bus operators.

Marketing Proposal

Marketing will be aligned, with TfWM and local bus operators working together to ensure that customers are fully informed on local bus services. This new approach will see a guarantee of 0.5% of ticket sales revenue allocated to marketing activity.

Ticket Discounting

As part of the launch of the new simplified ticket range, TfWM will support all operators in maintaining discounted ticketing to ensure customer best value across the complete product range and sustaining a real term reduction in ticket prices for customers across all operator services.

Passenger Incentive Programme

TfWM will work with bus operators to deliver a comprehensive passenger incentive programme that will use data to provide bespoke discounted and free travel offers that both encourage people to return to public transport whilst also generating new users.

Passenger Incentive Programme - non-exhaustive list of activities



Targeting previous customers that are yet to return following the Covid-19 pandemic



Incentivising non-users through promotions – for example, offering discounted or free travel to those people that use our Swift system to pay for their parking in the region



Free bus travel week to promote the bus to everyone



Social prescribing trials to show that access to transport is a key part of recovery and healthy living. The aim here is to create a legacy where future funding will be accepted to move from a trial into mainstream if the trials are successful



Free travel for new home-owners encouraging them convert to public transport use



Discount and offers to encourage take up of new ticketing technologies such as Swift Go that offers flexible best value capping which is perfect for workers returning to hybrid arrangements

We Will:

Transform multi-modal information across the network and bring about effective and enhanced disruption information across all bus services to match that of rail and Metro

Provide Real Time Information screens, or virtual Real Time via smart phone to every stop across the region

Make our bus infrastructure cleaner, and greener and provide new enhanced branded infrastructure at all key centres across our network by 2024

Publish statistics on the performance of our bus network to build confidence in its use to promote patronage growth

Our ambition is to “Inform, Reassure and Inspire” the customer experience by providing higher-quality, and wider reaching information that is accessible to all.

Building on our current provision of bus information, we will deliver enhanced integrated information so that the customer can make more informed decisions regarding their journey.

We will work in partnership with operators of other modes to ensure that improved multi-modal information is provided at all interchanges and managed bus stations on printed and digital platforms.

Access to real time journey information will be provided at all stops across the network, via “virtual” displays, such as through a QR code or NFC tag, ensuring information is accessible for those with disabilities. We will install more electronic information screens at locations, focussed on the core network and working with suppliers of new technology ensure that these deliver information to assist visually impaired customers.

We will provide useful, up-to-date and accurate digital information that can assist customers along their journey, either via our network platforms or customer’s mobile devices, giving them greater confidence

to use the system and potentially assisting with onward travel.

We will continue to deliver information through a variety of channels including at the point of getting on the bus as well as onboard the vehicle itself, to ensure that smartphone ownership is not a barrier to information.

We will support travel demand management through information and deliver systems, software and processes that support the RTCC. This will include enhanced disruption information and tools to give customers more information as to why and what alternatives are available, and support operational management of the network to improve bus performance and use.

We will continue to deliver our local TfWM branding across the network and support the vision of a core network that is easily recognised and contributes to a good customer experience. We will continue to work with our local bus operators to retain successful existing brands. Streamlined local branding, marketing and communications will improve the clarity and quality of customer information. This will ensure a more intuitive understanding of a single integrated public transport system across Bus, Sprint, Metro and Rail.

CRSTS investment themes:

- Making behaviour change easy
- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities

Customer Information and Infrastructure

Page 132
We will make our transport assets cleaner, greener and accessible for all. Bus shelters, interchanges and our managed bus stations are the “shop window” for new customers. We will ensure that these facilities across the core network are enhanced and branded to attract new users and encourage modal shift.

We will work with local authorities to enhance the public realm around bus stops to ensure that the locality is safe and provides a positive stepping off point to improve the overall bus journey.

We will enhance our current marketing strategies and promote and provide sustainable travel information that promote the benefits of sustainable transport compared to driving.

We will publish statistics on the performance of the bus network to tell a “good story” through information outputs , particularly focussing on reliability.

We have already made investment into understanding bus “real journey times” , with the intention of including this information on electronic passenger information displays across the bus network.



We Will:

- Aim to achieve a 100% zero-emission bus fleet by 2030
- Seek an 750 additional zero emission buses by 2025
- Plan to have over 1,000 zero emission buses by 2025
- Continue the delivery of pantograph charging infrastructure to support all operators in accelerating to zero emission

CRSTS investment themes:

- Making behaviour change easy
- Delivering a green revolution
- Supporting inclusive growth

We plan to have more new electric buses, new hydrogen buses and electric re-powered buses operating across the region. Our continued commitment to improve bus emissions in the region would see all buses zero emission by 2036. Through additional Government funding to our BSIP ask, we can accelerate this timeframe towards 2030 for all remaining 1,750 vehicles (after this BSIP investment) to be zero emission. An average annual investment of £134m in zero emission buses and associated infrastructure is required to meet this goal.

Our current roadmap for zero emission buses

2021

- First 20 hydrogen double deck buses
- First 5 electric re-powered buses

2022

- First public owned pantograph at Wolverhampton Bus Station
- First subsidised zero emission bus service in the West Midlands

2023

- 100 additional hydrogen double deck buses
- World's largest hydrogen bus rapid transit system (24 vehicles)

2025

- First fully zero emission local bus fleet operator on West Midlands services (Stagecoach)
- Coventry's all-electric bus city

2030

- National Express's entire fleet zero emission target
- All WMCA subsidised bus services zero emission target
- Network of 36 pantograph charging infrastructure across the West Midlands for use by local bus services and cross-boundary services, with the opportunity for multi-modal use



Modern Buses and Decarbonisation

Page 134

Alongside our zero emission bus ambitions, our immediate action in 2022 would be to make all buses in the region at least Euro VI. Our successful retrofit programmes have improved the emissions for over 1,000 buses in the last 3 years. The remaining 120 buses across local bus services and the community transport sector would be targeted to ensure cleaner air for all.

As more new buses operate in the West Midlands, our vehicle standards would improve. Enhanced passenger features will be stipulated on all new buses including next-stop audio and visual information, an induction hearing loop, a second wheelchair space and on-board CCTV for enhanced passenger and driver safety and incident reporting.

We would also work closely with operators to improve the passenger information on existing buses. In 2020, we completed a successful project to retrofit on-board next-stop audio and visual information to existing buses. This would be expanded across the existing bus fleet to make buses accessible for all.

Through the investment in new buses, we will commit to improving vehicle safety standards. We will look to develop a Bus Safety Standard for the West Midlands in collaboration with local operators, vehicle manufacturers, the Urban Transport Group and wider bus industry. This will be delivered and initially applied to new buses and on our subsidised bus network.



We Will:

- Give passengers in our region a stronger voice
- Ensure passengers can easily have their say and that they feel listened to
- Work with partners to act quickly if things go wrong
- Promote an environment in which feedback is actively encouraged and used positively to improve the customer experience

CRSTS investment themes:

- Making behaviour change easy

The Customer Charter

We will develop a single Bus Passenger Charter for the region that gives customers information about what they can expect from the bus service in the West Midlands, including tangible outputs, and how to complain where expectations are not met.

The Charter will:

- Confirm the geographical scope of the bus service
- Explain the responsibilities of TfWM and the bus operators
- Set the standards that passengers can expect to receive with regards to punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, service distribution, information standards and accessibility of buses and bus infrastructure
- Include details of inclusive transport provision and specific customer support arrangements for disabled people
- Offer help when things go wrong by signposting sources of support, and summarise the complaint handling process

Passenger Engagement Opportunities

The Bus Charter and related standards will be partially informed by customers through engagement with passenger representatives and advocacy groups. We will ensure passengers have a range of ongoing opportunities through which to engage with TfWM and the bus operators.

Mechanisms for redress

We will ensure our Bus Passenger Charter is easy to understand through engagement with passenger representatives and advocacy groups, including those with insights into accessibility and equality barriers. We will make it easy for all passengers to provide feedback and ensure that processes are in place to put things right if they go wrong. Giving passengers a stronger voice will support improvements in overall satisfaction.

Driver Training Programmes

We will also work closely with operators to improve staff engagement and customer satisfaction and standards, through enhanced driver training programmes.

We Will:

Page 136

- Deliver targeted campaigns that focus on education and intervention to reduce offences
- Roll out CCTV at key locations for enhanced staff and public safety
- Improve lighting at bus stations, stops and interchanges
- Increase our presence and patrols on the network

It is imperative that the Safer Travel Partnership (our collaboration with West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and Transport for West Midlands) gives passengers confidence as they use the bus. It is important that the safety and security of customers is considered from the 'whole journey experience' point of view. Increasing security measures at stops and interchanges is as important as improving key routes to those stops and interchanges.

Feedback has shown the primary interventions that are requested and needed in this area, and it is these interventions, along with key linked deliverables within the Safer Travel Plan, that have informed the actions to be taken. This fits well with the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy being developed locally by the Police and Crime Commissioner, to address concerns, where transport has been highlighted as a place where women and girls feel less safe.

Targeted campaigns that focus on education and intervention

Young people are more likely to be victims of crime and focus on education and intervention needs to be considered in this space. Research shows that education can reduce the offences that young people are exposed to. We plan to deliver this through

the Education Officer engaging with a minimum of 30,000 young people and women per year on education programmes.

The roll out of CCTV at key locations

Technology has also proved to be an extremely cost-effective tool in relation to both staff and public safety on the transport networks. In a CCTV-rich environment, the opportunities for evidence gathering and real-time interventions and incident reporting are clear. This will be delivered by installing remote access CCTV to over 50 shelters and HD CCTV on 11 routes.

Improved lighting at stations, stops and interchanges

Well-illuminated areas tend to improve people's perception of safety and lower their fear of crime. Upgrading lighting and reducing dark spaces will deliver this improvement.

Increased patrols

All demographics favour an increase in capable guardianship on the network, with all cohorts seeing this as their preferred top intervention in making them feel safer. We plan to add 9 more TSO's onto the network delivering 18,720 additional hours per year.

CRSTS investment themes:

- Healthy streets and spaces
- Making behaviour change easy
- Creating resilient networks and communities

We Will:

Page 137

- Develop an ongoing pipeline of costed proposals to evolve the integration and transformation of the bus network through enhanced services, more bus priority and better passenger infrastructure.
- Work with our local highway authorities to continue exploring complementary measures to support bus growth including parking controls, better prioritisation of bus and capital investment in bus-based Park & Ride.

CRSTS investment themes:

- Healthy streets and spaces
- Making behaviour change easy
- Creating resilient networks and communities

The delivery of this BSIP forms the latest stage of an ongoing transformation of bus services and transport investment in the West Midlands. Buses have to act as the critical component in a major network of integrated sustainable and active travel.

This BSIP sets out the ambition to 2025 but the West Midlands intends to keep up this ambition and prepare for the next stages once this initial investment programme is implemented.

TfWM is currently undertaking an analysis of how integration between modes can be further improved as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Transport Plan. This work, titled 'Project Fuse', will further consider global best practice for the essential elements of integrated transport services.

As well as traditional approaches, this will consider future technology such as 5G communication systems to ensure the transport network is managed more efficiently and effectively, and passengers are kept well informed of the choices available to them and encouraged and incentivise active and sustainable travel.

We have to stay on top of the ambition to maintain Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares in levelling up the West Midlands.





BSIP Funding

48

Our BSIP funding ask to March 2025 is £662 million.

If provided in full, it would leverage a further investment of £406m of local and private sector contributions that we could raise on the back of this investment for Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares.

Our BSIP prospectus contains our ask for bus priority to develop the largest network of cross-city and cross-regional services ever developed, which underpins all of the other asks to Bus Back Better and build trust and confidence in our bus network.

Our BSIP investment complements our wider £1.05 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). Our CRSTS prospectus identified complementary ‘bus’ funding for some of our key priorities for bus rapid transit, simpler ticketing, enhanced public transport interchanges and demand-responsive network enhancements.

There is no duplication between the two. Together, they set out the need for over £1 billion for bus investment in the West Midlands. Both investment asks are aligned and provide strong synergies that, if nationally backed, would generate a real chance for levelling up of the West Midlands economy and “Building Back Better”.

Making it happen at pace

Page 139
The West Midlands has led the way on making positive change for bus through public-private partnerships, delivering over £500m of bus improvements through the West Midlands Bus Alliance since late 2015.

The award-winning West Midlands Bus Alliance is made up of local bus operators, local highway authorities, Transport for West Midlands, Confederation of Passenger Transport, Transport Focus and Bus Users UK. A Bus Alliance Board is responsible for setting objectives, overseeing work programmes and making sure work gets done and performance improves. The Bus Alliance Board is accountable to the WMCA Board. This has become the benchmark for public-private partnerships for bus services in the UK.

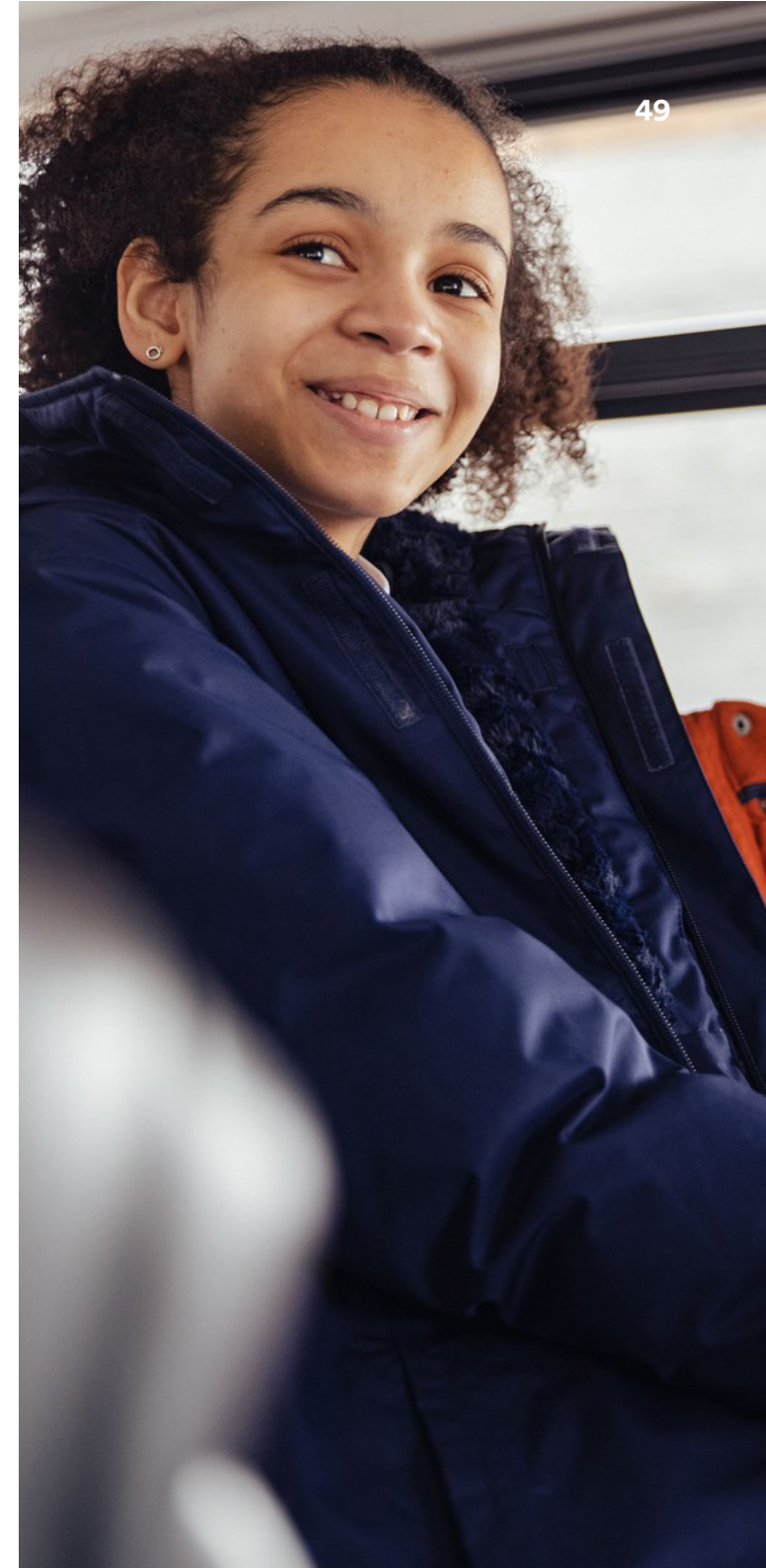
Nationally, TfWM are leading the way as the first, and currently (October 2021) only Mayoral Combined Authority with an Enhanced Partnership (EP).

We have a proven delivery track record spanning several decades. The skills, processes and mechanisms we have in place have been refined and strengthened over many successfully delivered small and large-scale capital projects.

Our project experience includes delivering the first part of our Bus Rapid Transit network – Sprint. It is critical that funding is secured to retain our local experience and expertise so that we can continue our bus service improvements to “Bus Back Better”.

Sustained investment and delivery at pace will be accomplished through our existing West Midlands Bus Alliance and associated Enhanced Partnership delivery model. As the BSIP is published, our Bus Alliance governance will be reviewed, alongside necessary updates to our existing EP. There is no end date to the BSIP – it will be reviewed at least annually through the Bus Alliance to ensure alignment with the emerging LTP and any other relevant national or regional plans.

Through delivery, if the BSIP vision and outcomes cannot be delivered in partnership, franchising is identified as a mechanism to which LTA's can turn to deliver the BSIP. TfWM is undertaking an assessment of the wider bus service reform options available through the Bus Services Act 2017. This ongoing assessment includes bus franchising options and will detail how the BSIP vision could be pursued and delivered using the 2017 Act.



Appendix: BSIP Overview

50

Overview of the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

Page 140

Name	West Midlands Combined Authority
Enhanced Partnership or Franchising (or both)	Enhanced Partnership (Separate Bus Delivery Options Assessment including Franchising being undertaken)
Date of Publication	5 November 2021
Date of next annual update	October 2022
URL:	West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan Transport for West Midlands (tfwm.org.uk)

Targets	2018/2019	2019/20	2024/2025	Description of how each will be measured
Journey Time	16.5kph overall 14.4kph slowest centre 18.5kph fastest centre	16.2kph overall 13.8kph slowest centre 18.0kph fastest centre	17.2kph overall 16.4kph slowest centre 18.6kph fastest centre	Bus speeds kph (MF 0700-1100). Network overall and by strategic centre, using operator AVL data
Reliability	83% overall 78% lowest centre 88% highest centre	85% overall 80% lowest centre 89% highest centre	95% overall 95% lowest centre 95% highest centre	Bus punctuality (% within 1 min early and 5 late (MF 0700-1100). Network overall and by strategic centre, using operator AVL data
Passenger Numbers	262 million	248 million	268 million	Boardings measured using operator journeys in their Operator Return ('OP1') forms (used for concessionary reimbursement).
Average Passenger Satisfaction	84%	85%	89%	Average passenger satisfaction with service overall, measured using Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey data.

Delivery – BSIP policies to:	BSIP Funding to March 2025	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning		
<i>More frequent and reliable services</i>		
Review service frequency	£136.3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a stable network to welcome the world to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Sustain and enhance frequencies on over 110 routes, including evenings and Sundays New cross-city and cross-regional ‘levelling up’ network connecting all parts of our region to jobs and new opportunities, giving 40% of passengers direct links to more places
Increase bus priority measures	£246m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trebling the amount of bus priority, providing £700m of economic benefits 106km of new bus lanes A shovel-ready programme of priority for delivery both before and beyond 2025 Full alignment with CRSTS and other funding streams
Increased demand responsive services	See review service frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Package of new additional DRT services, incorporating Ring & Ride and Community Transport Repositioning Community Transport and DRT with a mainstream identity within the wider bus network Ensuring DRT feeds the core bus, metro and rail networks and active travel
Bus rapid transit (BRT) network	See increase bus priority measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Sprint BRT corridor opens ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games New cross-region links, helping level-up the Midlands by connecting Walsall, Birmingham city centre, Birmingham Airport, Solihull and HS2 in the future. Delivering more bus priority to provide the foundation for our BRT plans.

Improvements to planning / integration with other modes		
Integrated services with other transport modes	See more frequent and reliable services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Seamless and reliable travel choices to better integrate with other transport modesPhysical integration at key interchanges and with active travel modesEnsuring buses meet train and tram times, especially first and last journeys
Simplify services		<ul style="list-style-type: none">A core network of 110 turn-up-and-go servicesEnhanced frequencies and minimum service levelsLocal and supported services
Review socially necessary services		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and support more services impacted by covid to help recover the customer base and usage
Improvements to fares and ticketing		
Lower Fares	£53m	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Keeping England’s cheapest bus fares, already reduced in July 2021£4/day and £15/week capped low fares (down from £5/day and £18/week)Continuing daily, 3-day and 7-day capped faresPassenger Incentive Programme to target 500k people with bespoke offers
Simplify Fares		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Goal of no premium for multi-operator ticketsMassively simplified fares and ticketing offer of just 6 ticket typesPrices shown at every stop for the first time ever
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport	£0.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none">New multi-modal capping back officeCustomers will always get best value whichever mode they useGoal shared by all operators of no premium for multi-operator ticketsBuilds upon highly successful Swift Go and nBus / nNetwork schemes

Delivery – BSIP policies to:	BSIP Funding to March 2025	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
<i>Higher specification buses</i>		
Invest in improved bus specifications	£3.9m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced passenger information and safety standards on new and existing buses.
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	£1m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trialling new and innovative forms of public transport underpinning a multi-modal transport system Enhanced driver training programmes to improve staff and customer engagement and satisfaction
Protect personal safety of bus passengers	£1.1m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted campaigns to focus on education and intervention to reduce offences, particularly for women and young people New CCTV at key locations for enhanced staff and public safety Improved lighting at bus stations, stops and interchanges Increased presence and patrols on the network
Invest in decarbonisation	£161m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional 750 zero emission buses by 2025 100% zero emission fleet by 2030 Fastest city region to fully zero £313m of match funding from private sector

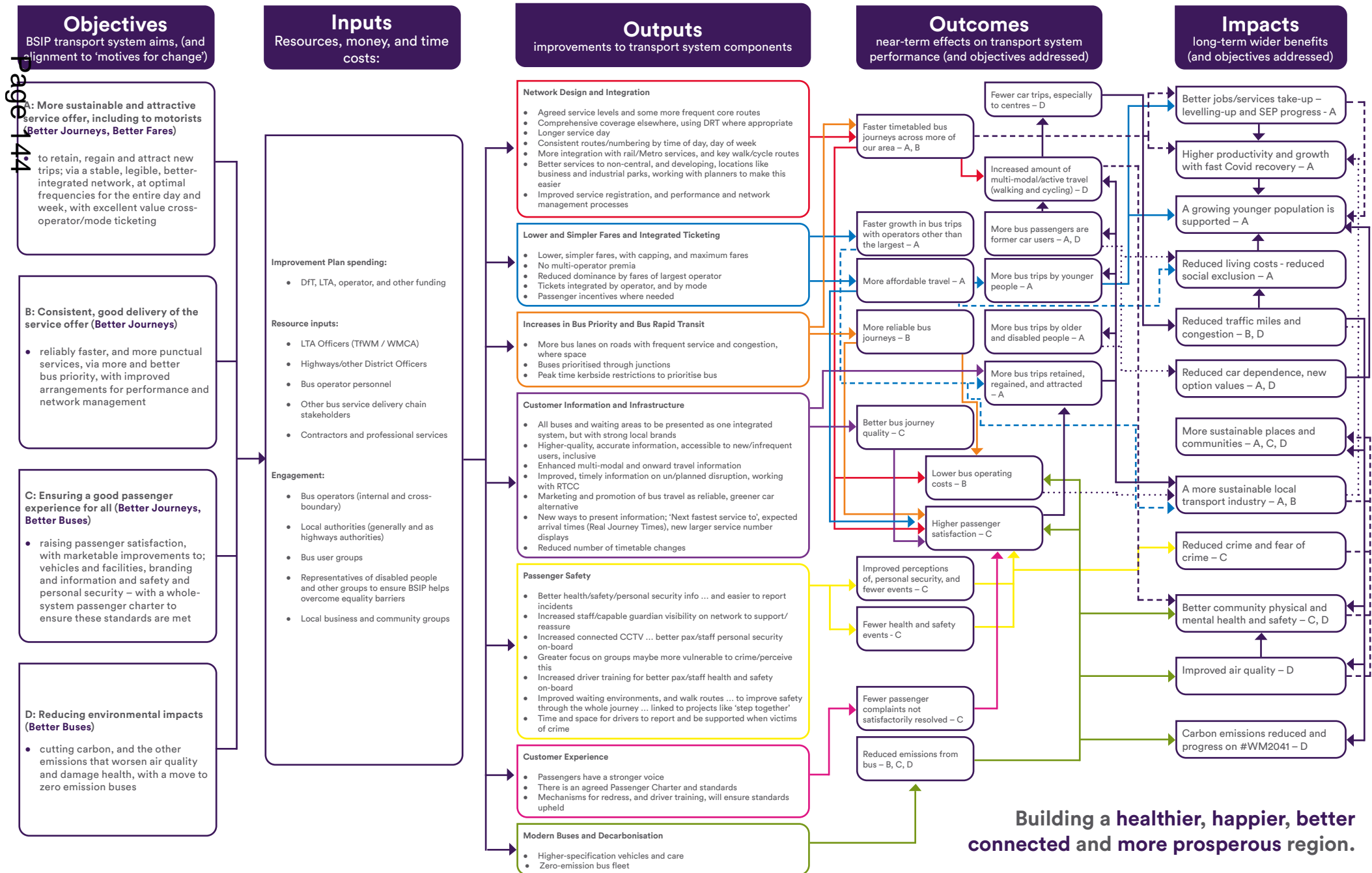
<i>Improvements to passenger engagement</i>		
Passenger Charter	£0.3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Bus Passenger Charter for the region Giving passengers a stronger voice and ensuring they can easily have their say and that they feel listened to. Working with partners to act quickly if things go wrong and promoting an environment in which feedback is actively encouraged and used positively to improve the customer experience.
Strengthen network identity	£5.6m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing the West Midlands Bus branding roll out across the network Alignment with equivalent brands for other modes to give single integrated transport network Supporting the vision of a core network that is easily recognised and aids clarity and simplicity 0.5% of fares revenue invested in marketing
Improve bus information	£17.7m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformed availability of multi-modal information across the network Effective and enhanced disruption information across all bus services to match that of rail and Metro. Real Time Information screens, or virtual Real Time via smart phone, to every stop across the region.

Appendix: BSIP Overview

Delivery – BSIP Policies to:	BSIP Funding to March 2025	Explanation (max 50 words)
Other		
Customer infrastructure	£23.9m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will make our bus infrastructure cleaner, and greener New enhanced branded infrastructure at all key centres across our network by 2024
Network Management	£5.3m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved network management by bringing together operators and local highway authorities in a single system through the established Regional Transport Coordination Centre Manage headways and network resilience across the network between operators and highway authorities
Marketing	£4.5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 0.5% of fares revenue re-invested in marketing New and exciting marketing campaigns to encourage ridership and get people back to bus
LTA Delivery	£1.8m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of staff resources and capabilities to deliver the ambitious BSIP investment delivery programme

Appendix: Logic Map

54





Transport for
West Midlands



West Midlands
Combined Authority

This page is intentionally left blank

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan

October 2020



Transport for
West Midlands



West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) seeks to develop and promote a fully integrated transport system, where each public transport mode (rail, Metro, bus and demand responsive transport) contributes towards the overall objective of enabling all residents to have easy access to a range of services and facilities. Bus is central to this and an Enhanced Partnership offers a mechanism to help achieve the objective.

Drawing on Transport for West Midlands' Strategic Vision for Bus, this document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for the West Midlands. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of an EP Scheme for the first two Sprint corridors (A34 and A45) that have been prioritised to support the 2022 Commonwealth Games. However, over the Plan period, other potential EP Schemes may be put forward by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), constituent authorities or bus operators and promoted through the West Midlands Bus Alliance.

Whilst significant progress in improving bus services is being achieved through the Bus Alliance and the Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes already in place in central Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Solihull, an Enhanced Partnership is considered the best way of ensuring that some of the more ambitious plans to transform bus travel are achieved. Amongst these are the Sprint bus rapid transit corridors, which will rely on investment both in vehicles (by operators) and infrastructure (by local authorities). The EP will place binding commitments on partner organisations to provide the necessary enhancements, as well as ensuring on-going provision of high-quality bus services.

In accordance with statutory requirements for an EP Plan, this document includes:

- Details of the area covered
- Factors affecting the local bus market
- A summary of passengers' experiences of using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
- Trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on bus services
- Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
- Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes



Overview

The West Midlands has strong growth ambitions to improve productivity and the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the region. The development of HS2, 2021 UK City of Culture in Coventry, and the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will help transform the region and drive investment, offering opportunities for the bus to play an important role in meeting existing and new travel demands.

Transport is key to economic growth, but traffic congestion can constrain this ambition. TfWM is supporting local authority partners and investing to develop a world-class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient travel across the region, thereby reducing the need for journeys to be made by car.

In 2017/18, 71.9¹ million bus service miles were operated in the West Midlands by 26 bus operators. This represents the largest number of bus service miles for a metropolitan area in England (outside of London) and the largest commercially-provided bus network (66.5 million bus service miles). Some 5.4 million bus service miles operate with financial support from TfWM and local authority partners.

With its widespread coverage, bus plays a vital role across the region. The bus accounts for 4 out of 5 public transport journeys and remains the most important, adaptable and flexible mode, serving and supporting a better quality of life for West Midlands residents. The importance of the bus for access to employment is illustrated in Figure 1.

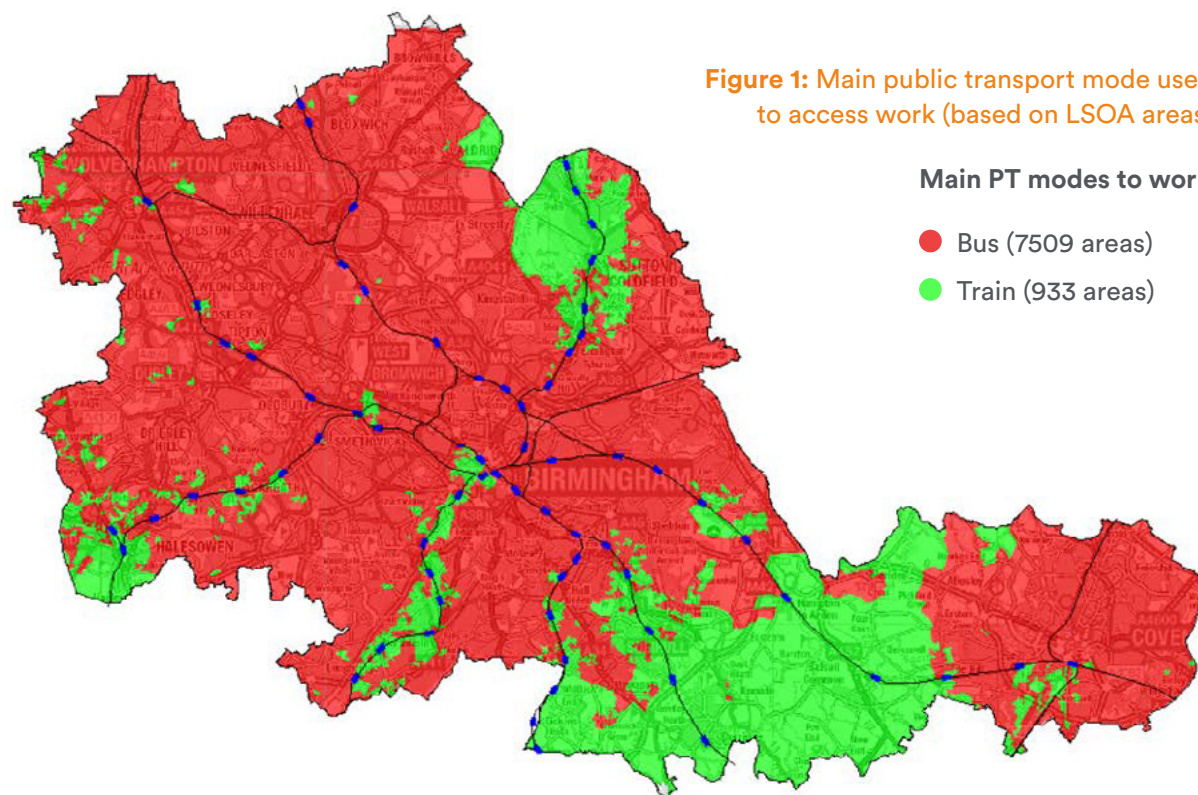


Figure 1: Main public transport mode used to access work (based on LSOA areas)

¹ DfT 2017/18, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled>

Bus passengers' views

The 2018 Bus Passenger Survey, undertaken by Transport Focus, reported that overall satisfaction with bus travel in the West Midlands stood at 84%. While this demonstrates high levels of satisfaction, this was slightly below the levels in the equivalent metropolitan areas of West Yorkshire (85%) and Greater Manchester (87%) and somewhat lower than Merseyside and Tyne & Wear (both 91%).

66%
Bus driver
greeting/welcome



66%
Value for money
fare-payers only

82%
Journey time



84%
Overall journey



71%
Punctuality

84%
Availability of seating
or space to stand



74%
Interior cleanliness
and condition

Influences on bus travel

Across the UK, bus use has been in general decline, mainly due to growing car ownership and use. However, in recent years, some areas or specific bus routes have seen growth.

Research into changing patterns of bus use (illustrated in Figure 2) suggests that about a half of the reduction in bus patronage can be explained by changing customer needs, particularly due to changes in car ownership and economic circumstances and the availability and acceptability of alternatives to travel, such as online services. Much of the remainder of the reduction in bus patronage is explained by increases in bus journey times (linked to increasing traffic levels) and rises in bus fares. In contrast, there are some factors that have helped to increase bus use, attributable to population growth and reduced car use.

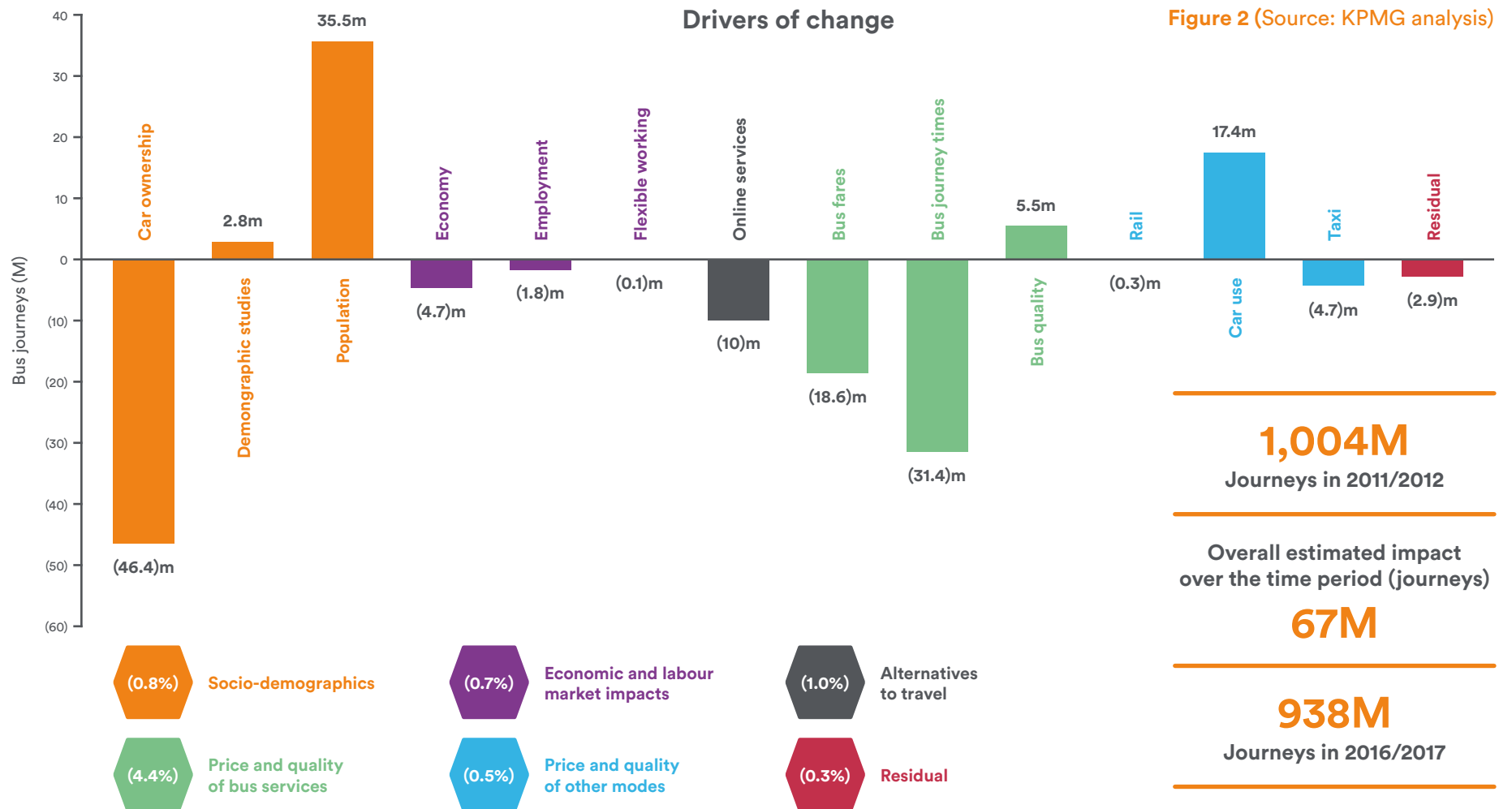


Figure 2 (Source: KPMG analysis)

Figures based on UTG member areas

Car ownership

In the West Midlands, over half of bus users have no access to a car and so rely on public transport for their travel needs. Where people have access to a car, their likelihood of using the bus reduces², from on average of 181 bus journeys per year to 55 (part access to a vehicle) and 14 (full access to a vehicle).

Figure 3: Car ownership in the West Midlands

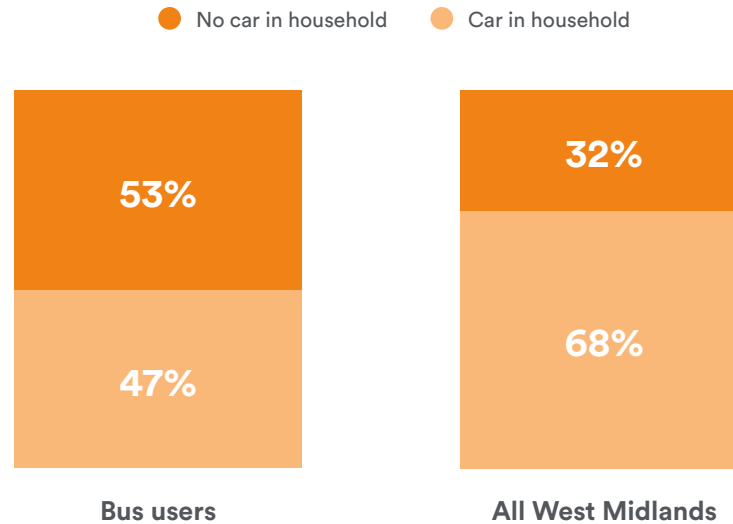
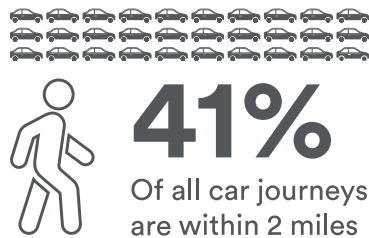


Figure 4: Car ownership usage and characteristics in the West Midlands



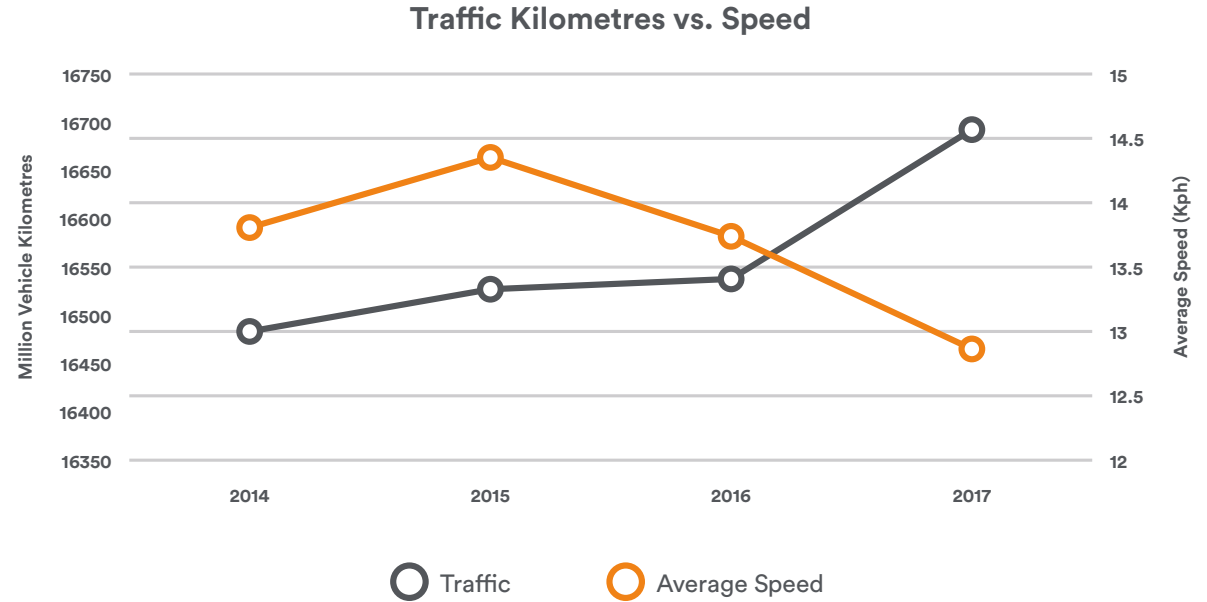
Car parking

In Birmingham city centre, the region's strategic economic centre, there are about 60,000 public and private non-residential car parking spaces available, both on-street and off-street. This is against an average weekday vehicle demand for parking spaces in the city centre of about 45,000 vehicles. This suggests an over-supply of parking, which undermines local and regional policies to see a shift towards reducing private car use and encouraging more sustainable forms of travel.

The high level of parking availability in Birmingham city centre also contributes to peak period traffic congestion and associated travel unreliability, together with problems of poor air quality.

Congestion

Traffic congestion is a significant challenge for buses, restricting their ability to reach their potential by increasing journey times and impacting negatively on service reliability. Since 2015, average traffic speeds have fallen as levels of traffic have increased. If congestion is unmanaged, it will continue to have detrimental impacts on people and businesses, increasing business costs, affecting productivity and reducing accessibility to labour markets, as well as being responsible for harmful emissions. Equally, if unchecked, congestion could worsen from increased travel demand resulting from development and population growth. Also, major infrastructure projects, such as HS2, might have impacts on bus services during their construction period.



Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to suffer delays, variability and increases in journey times and operating costs, leading to declining attractiveness of the service and thus fewer passengers. Bus operators are forced to respond to congestion in one of two ways – both with a similar outcome in terms of patronage decline. First, to maintain levels of service where congestion worsens, bus operators may need to run more buses, which adds to the costs of providing services. A second response is to operate services less frequently.

Congestion causes:

- **Journey time increases and variability** – whereby bus services become unreliable, with journey times varying from advertised timetables and overall journeys taking longer.

- **Decreasing accessibility** – slower average bus speeds lead to reduced accessibility, as fewer people can access places in a reasonable journey time.
- **Decreasing attractiveness of bus** – greater journey time variability and declining accessibility reduce the appeal of buses, meaning they are at risk of further patronage decline.
- **Higher bus operating costs** – a 10 per cent decrease in operating speeds leads to an 8 per cent increase in operating costs. If this is passed on to passengers through higher fares it results in a 5.6 per cent fall in patronage³.

Reduced use of the bus may lead to greater car use, creating further congestion.

One measure of the passenger experience is the real journey time incurred and the reliability of journey times. A tool to measure this has been devised and is shown in Appendix B, with some example journeys listed to highlight what it shows.

Accessibility analyses are another way of highlighting the relative ability of buses to provide services that people want. Such analysis shows that while 54.5% of residents could access at least three main centres within 45 minutes by public transport in October 2011, this had fallen to 44.8% in October 2017.

The impact of slower average traffic speeds on levels of accessibility is illustrated in Appendix A. For example, in the context of Birmingham between 2008 and 2018 increasing bus journey times resulted in 216,000 fewer people being within a 45-minute bus journey of the city centre.

³ The impact of congestion on bus passengers, Green Journeys, Professor David Begg

Air Quality

Air pollution in the West Midlands affects some 2.8 million people, reducing average life expectancy by up to 6 months, and is responsible for economic costs estimated at £860 million per year. It is estimated that road transport emissions account for around 1,460 premature deaths in the region each year, with 890 in Birmingham alone.

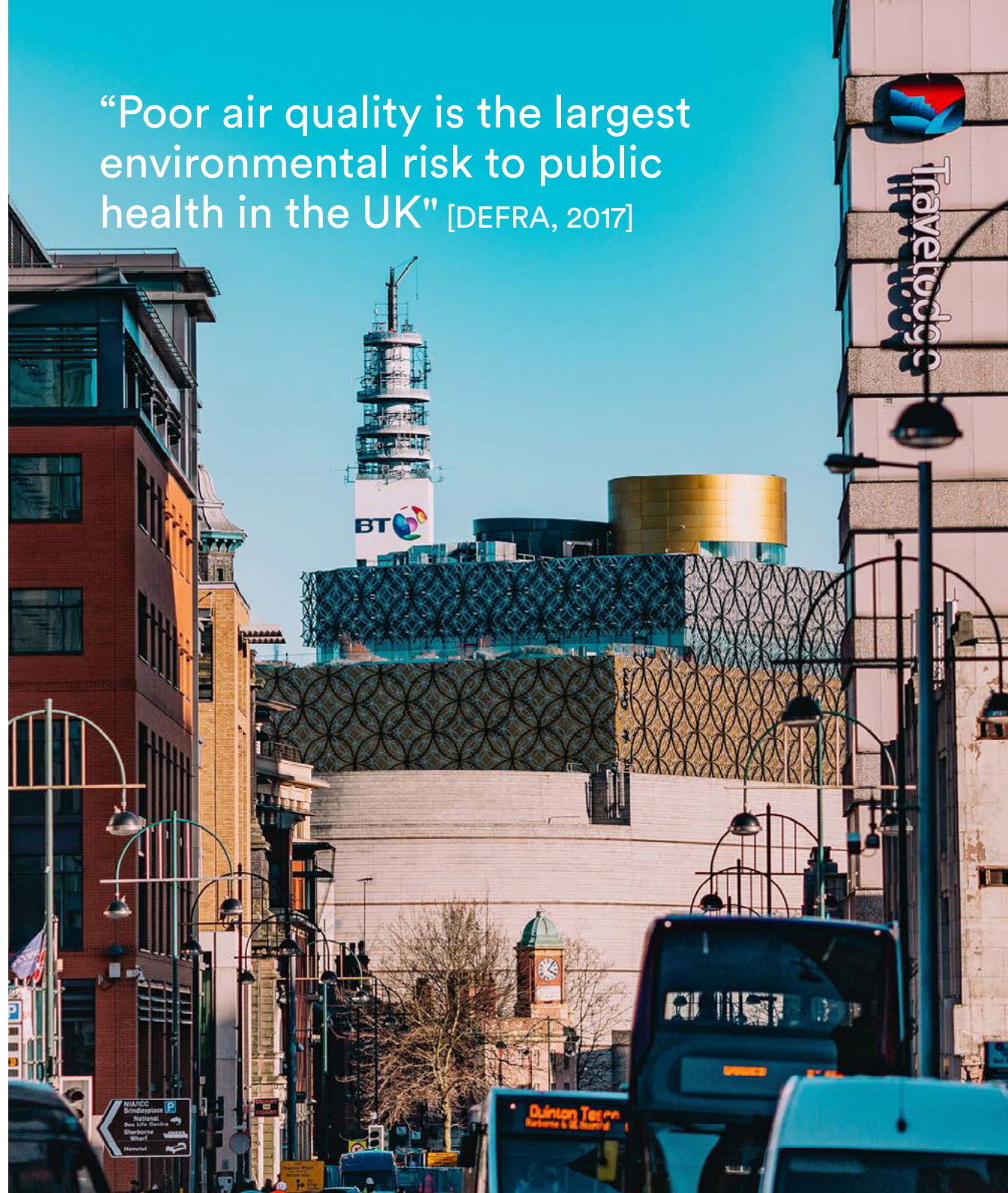
In all seven constituent authorities in the region, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and/or particulate matter concentration thresholds are currently exceeded (relative to EU limits). The authorities have been instructed by DEFRA to take local action. Birmingham City Council plans to implement a Class D Clean Air Zone, no earlier than July 2020.

Reducing bus emissions is an important vital part of the programme to improve people's health and quality of life by cleaning up the air in the West Midlands. The Mayor of the West Midlands and West Midlands Bus Alliance have committed to create the cleanest bus fleet in the UK, outside London. The aim is for the entire bus fleet in the West Midlands metropolitan area to meet at least Euro VI emissions standards by April 2021⁴, cutting harmful pollution from buses by up to 95 per cent.

Since 2015, over 350 new vehicles have entered service, older vehicles retrofitted to Euro VI standards, supported bus contracts specified as Euro VI standard, and orders placed for zero-emission buses (electric and hydrogen).

⁴ West Midlands Combined Authority Board
28 June 2019 <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=221&Ver=4>

“Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK” [DEFRA, 2017]



This section sets out the policy background to the EP Plan.

Strategic Economic Plan

The bus has a significant role to play in helping overcome the strategic challenges outlined in the SEP, with transport interventions that:



500,000

new jobs



20,000

more businesses



16,000

additional
hectares of
employment land



215,000

additional homes

- **Support an accessible network**

Addressing transport barriers (accessibility, availability and affordability) for excluded groups.

- **Deliver support that connects people to key employment and skills opportunities**

Ensuring growth is inclusive by helping the most vulnerable and isolated groups share in economic prosperity.

- **Ensure alignment with the Public Service Reform agenda and Local Industrial Strategy**

Targeting interventions which secure better for less from public services, improving the life changes and the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Movement for Growth

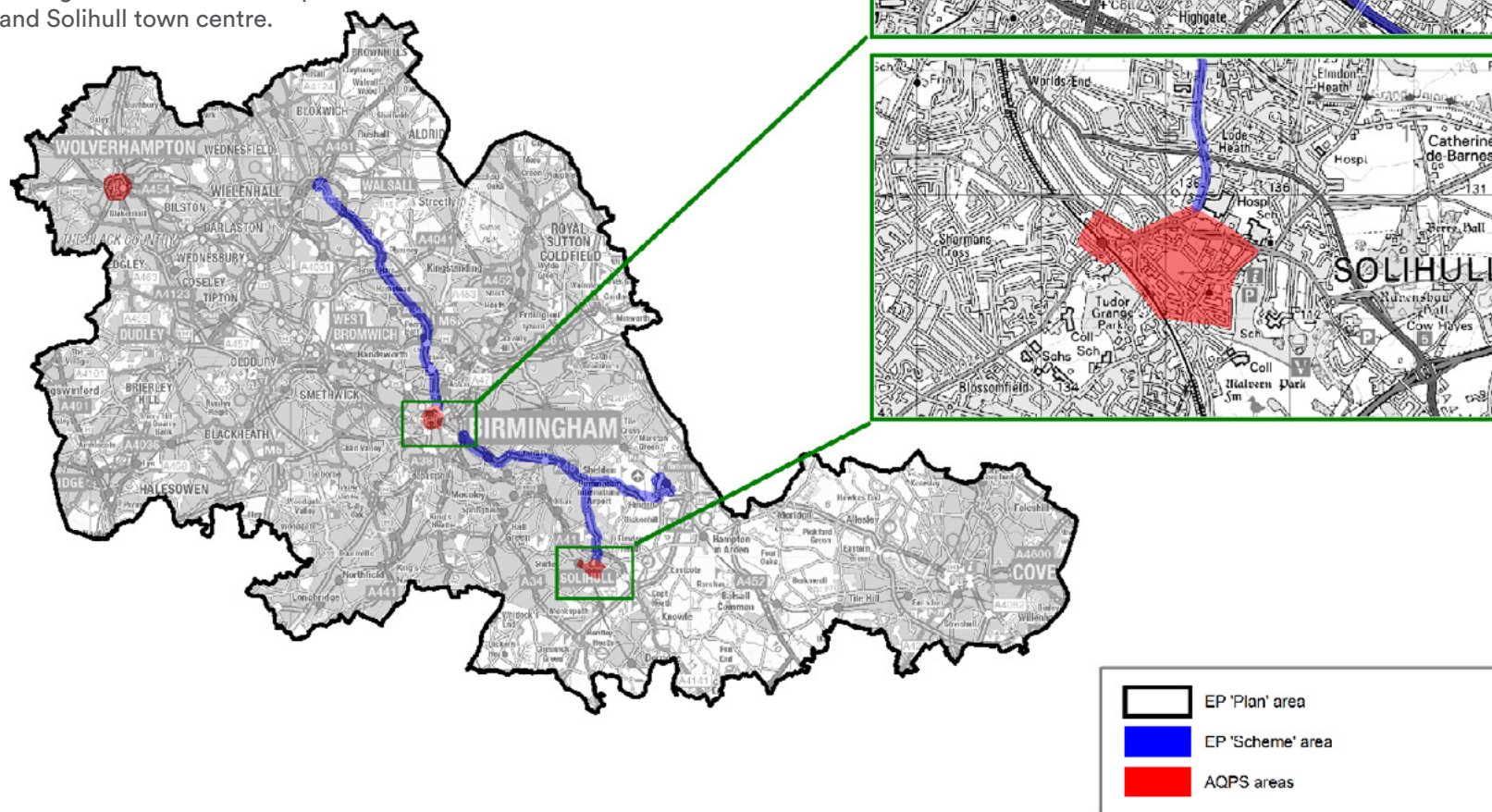
‘Movement for Growth’, the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, sets out improvements to the transport system to support the economic growth and regeneration of the region, support new developments and housing and improve air quality, the environment and social inclusion.



Map of Enhanced Partnership 'Plan' and 'Scheme' areas

Plan area

The EP Plan covers the entire area of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), excluding the areas within the existing Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes (AQPS) for Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres and Solihull town centre.



© Crown copyright 2019 OS 100019543. West Midlands Combined Authority.

You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data.

You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Objectives

The EP Plan provides the framework to contribute towards meeting the 9 objectives set out in the ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’:

- UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
- Fully integrated bus network, including demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting interchange with rail, coach and Metro to form one network.
- Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
- Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
- Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long-held barriers and perceptions.
- Accountable network performance management, tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
- World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
- All young people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
- Evolve a network to support a 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.

The Plan provides the backdrop for specific EP Schemes that will detail actions and developments to be taken jointly by partners to deliver a marked improvement in bus services on certain corridors or in defined areas that will help meet the above objectives, particularly by speeding up bus journeys times and improving journey time reliability. Such schemes may be suggested and promoted by TfWM, constituent local authorities or bus operators.

The first EP Scheme to be introduced will support the implementation of two Sprint corridors, including improved infrastructure and the operation of high-quality buses, as follows:

- Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (A45)
- Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (A34)

Ultimately, a network of Sprint corridors will be established across the West Midlands, as shown in Figure 5.

The Plan supports the key principles underpinning the provision of Sprint corridors, in respect of:

- Providing confidence to operators to invest in high quality vehicles
- Ensuring reliable journey time performance
- Managing access at certain stops
- Enhanced vehicle standards
- Enhanced vehicle environmental standards
- Vehicle, driver and customer service standards are enhanced and maintained
- Infrastructure is maintained and enforced
- Continued availability of inter-operable ticketing

- Ensuring incident conditions are managed effectively on a collaborative basis
- Providing a mechanism for sharing data and reporting on corridor performance

Strategic Vision for Bus

Outlining the role of bus in supporting the overall transport aspirations, ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’ sets out the following vision:

“A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all across the West Midlands, with excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options. Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.”

Governance

A Reference Group, comprising the following, developed this Plan:

- TfWM
- Constituent local authorities
- Bus operators
- Confederation of Passenger Transport
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Bus Users UK
- Transport Focus
- Birmingham Airport
- Neighbouring authorities (as observers)

The Group will be reconvened in the future if variations to the Plan are necessary.

The Enhanced Partnership is overseen by the West Midlands Bus Alliance and WMCA, who will also monitor progress made towards achieving the EP Plan objectives.

An EP Plan can only exist if there is at least one associated EP Scheme in place. Therefore, for as long as an EP Scheme is in place, a Plan must also be in place.



Small and medium-sized operators

The needs of small and medium-sized operators (SMOs) have been considered in the development of the Enhanced Partnership, with opportunities for all bus operators to participate throughout, either through individual discussions or through attendance at the Reference Group meetings. The Plan seeks to support improvements in all aspects of bus provision, regardless of the size of operators providing services. With the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area, smaller operators have been given extended periods to comply with the improved standards.

Competition

The Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment, undertaken by TfWM and shared with the Competition and Markets Authority, concluded that there will be no adverse impact on competition.

The implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. In particular, this will include improved quality of vehicles and emission standards (minimum standard of Euro VI). All operators in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme area will be required to make improvements in their fleet, which are considered proportionate in respect of the Climate Emergency declared by the WMCA. The Enhanced Partnership will not impact on competition, as operators will be free to amend and introduce services in the area, provided that the standards that apply to all operators are met.



Variations to the Plan

Consideration will be given to potential EP Plan variations highlighted either by one of the organisations represented on the EP Reference Group or an operator of qualifying local bus services. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to busalliance@tfwm.org.uk.

On receipt of a valid request for a variation, TfWM will reconvene the EP Plan Reference Group, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all bus operator and local highway authority and TfWM representatives present, TfWM will make the EP Plan variation with the relevant local highway authorities. Stakeholders not represented at the meeting will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.

If there is not full agreement of all stakeholders present, then the proposed variation will be put to the operator objection mechanism, but with a reduced objection period of 14 days replacing Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the TfWM website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the EP Plan area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, TfWM will make the EP Plan variation, subject to the approval of the relevant local highway authorities and TfWM.



Review of the EP Plan

Once the EP Plan is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Plan Reference Group at least annually. TfWM will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 6 months to complete.

As part of the review process, at least every 2nd year consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the milestone dates for the implementation of non-diesel vehicles, which will take into account changes in national and regional guidance and policy.

Depending on the outcome of the Outline Business Case⁵ assessment to consider the best future delivery model for bus services in the West Midlands from the Bus Services Act 2017, due to be completed in 2021, it may be necessary to review the EP Plan.

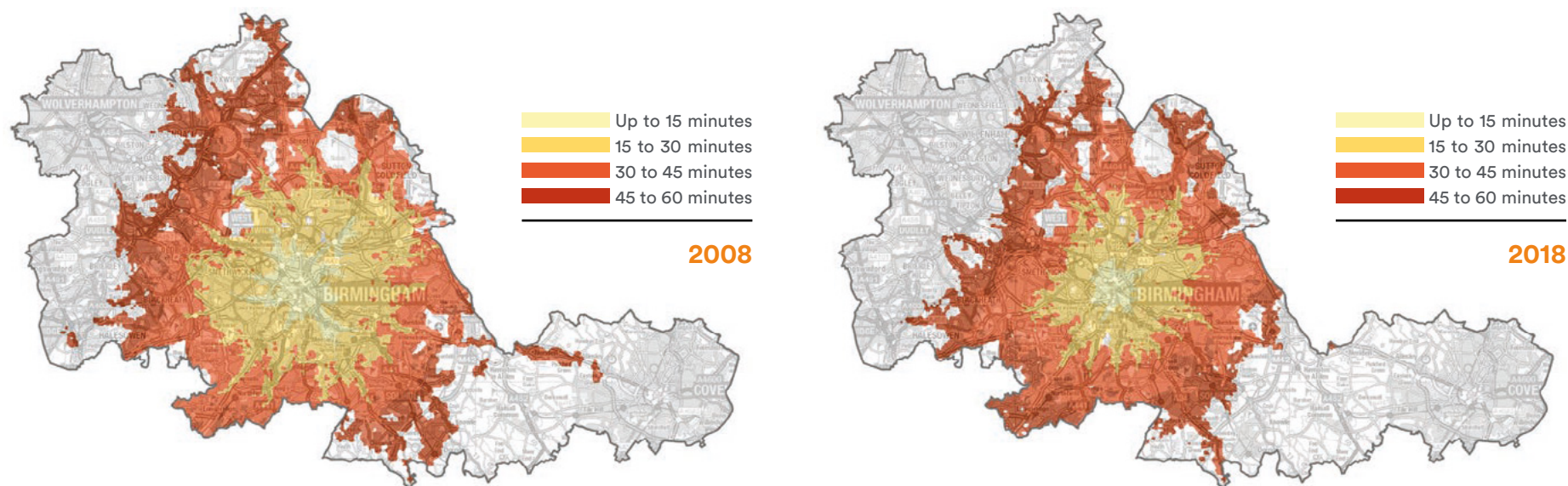
Revocation of the EP Plan

If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Plan to be revoked, the EP Plan Reference Group will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the Scheme' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).

If at any point in the future the EP Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Plan document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

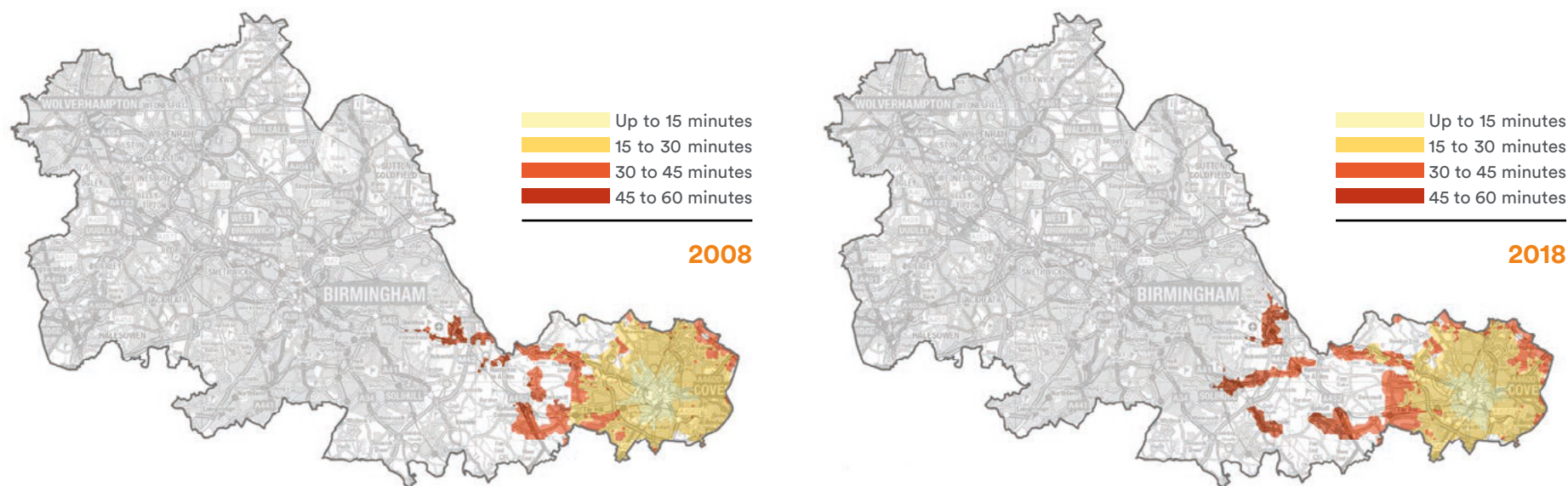
⁵ As approved by the WMCA Board at its meeting on the 28 June 2019: <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MIId=221&Ver=4>

Figure A1: AM Peak Journey Times to Birmingham City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



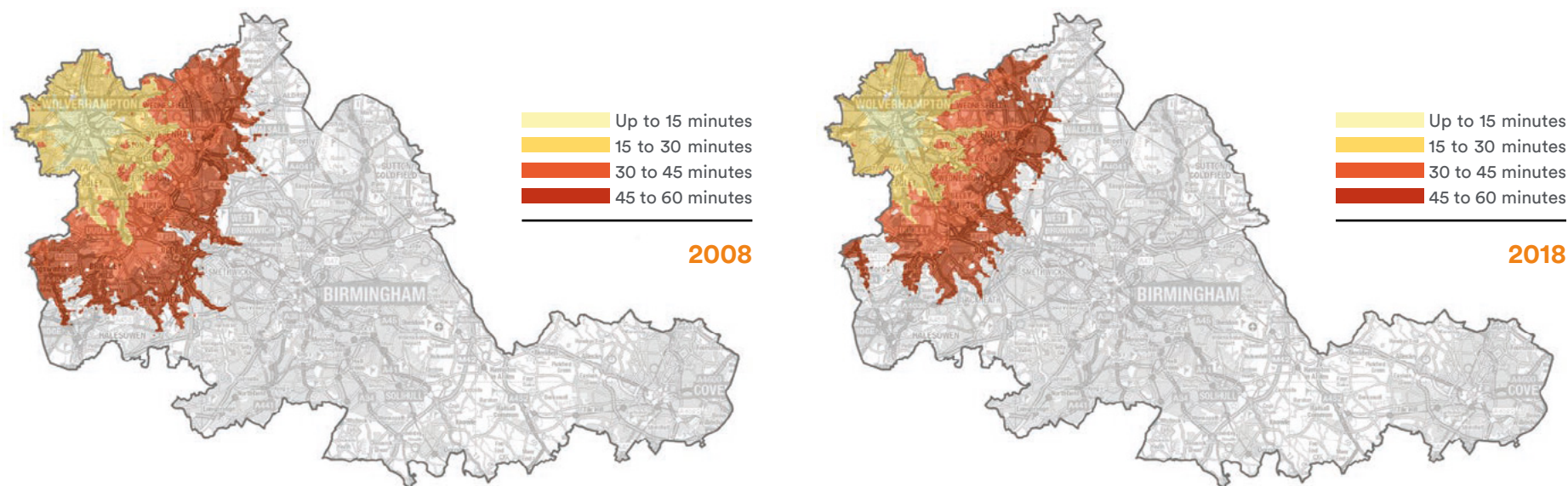
Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Birmingham: 1,511,350 in 2008, 1,287,810 in 2018.

Figure A2: AM Peak Journey Times to Coventry City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Coventry: 288,603 in 2008, 295,594 in 2018. The increase is due to improved service provision to Solihull.

Figure A3: AM Peak Journey Times to Wolverhampton City Centre by Bus (2008 and 2018)



Population living within 60 minutes by bus from Wolverhampton: 712,552 in 2008, 569,458 in 2018.

Real Journey Time (RJT) is a measure of how long passengers allow for a bus journey. This is not just a slowly-extending timetabled journey time, but also the contingency they add for delay, as passengers seek to reduce the risk of significant lateness more than to minimising their total travel time. Research suggests the contingency typically added to make up the RJT is that needed to cover the 95th percentile journey time.

An online tool (www.realjourneytime.co.uk) can be used to measure RJT for many services in the West Midlands. The output of the RJT for a selection of routes (April 2019) highlights some of the poorest passenger experiences of RJT compared with timetabled journey speed (TJS).

Journey from >to	Service	AM Peak journey times (mins)			Performance measures	
		Timetable	Real journey time	Must add	Current (all day) % service punctual	Additional (AM peak) RJ Speed /TJ Speed
Bloxwich > Walsall	31/32	12	21	9	65%	57%
Cape Hill > Birmingham	82/87	21	25	4	76%	84%
Foleshill > Coventry	20	13	21	8	69%	62%
Great Bridge > Birmingham	74	59	68	9	63%	87%
Halesowen > Birmingham	9	63	73	10	74%	86%
Harborne > Birmingham	23/24	25	41	16	80%	61%
Keresley > Coventry	16/A	31	47	16	77%	66%
Maypole > Birmingham	50	31	46	15	58%	67%
Solihull > Birmingham	4	45	55	10	63%	82%
Walsall > Oldbury	4	41	50	9	76%	82%
Wednesfield > Wolverhampton	59	14	22	8	82%	64%
Willenhall > Walsall	529	19	27	8	61%	70%
Wolverhampton > Dudley	1	47	51	4	69%	92%

One approach to improving network performance is to reduce the amount of contingency that passengers need to allow for their journeys, particularly targeting the worst ones first.

THIS DEED IS DATED:

Page 165

PARTY SEALS

(1) THE WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY
(WMCA) of 16 Summer Lane,
Birmingham, B19 3SD affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(5) SANDWELL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Sandwell Council
House, Freeth Street, Oldbury,
B69 3DE affixed hereto in
the presence of its duly
Authorised Officer

.....

(2) BIRMINGHAM CITY
COUNCIL of The Council
House, Victoria Square,
Birmingham B1 1BB affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(6) SOLIHULL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Council House,
Manor Square, Solihull, West
Midlands, B91 3QB affixed
hereto in the presence of its
duly Authorised Officer

.....

(3) COVENTRY CITY
COUNCIL of Council House,
Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....

(7) WALSALL
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH
COUNCIL of Civic Centre,
Darwall Street, Walsall,
WS1 1TP affixed hereto in
the presence of its duly
Authorised Officer

.....

(4) DUDLEY METROPOLITAIN
BOROUGH COUNCIL of
Council House,
Priory Road, Dudley, DY1 1HF
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....

(8) CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL of Civic
Centre, St. Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH
affixed hereto in the presence
of its duly Authorised Officer

.....



Transport for West Midlands

Building a healthier, happier, better connected
and more prosperous West Midlands.

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD | 0345 303 6760
To request a copy of this document in a different format, please get in touch.

TfWM Transport Delivery Committee

Date	9 January 2023
Report title	Update on the West Midlands Bus Network Review.
Portfolio Lead	Councillor Mary Locke – Lead Member Putting Passengers First Members Engagement Group
Accountable TfWM Director	Pete Bond – Director of Integrated Transport Services E-mail: Pete.Bond@tfwm.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Jon Hayes – Head of Bus E-mail: Jon.Hayes@tfwm.org.uk
Report has been considered by	Putting Passengers First – Members Engagement Group

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The West Midlands Transport Delivery Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members of the West Midlands Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) with an update on the review of Bus Services in the West Midlands which launched on Sunday 1st January 2023.
2. The context for this report is provided in the TDC reports of 10th October 2022 and 14th November 2022 which provide the details for why the review was required and the likely implications.

Background

1. As detailed in previous reports local bus services across the country are suffering from reduced passengers and revenues, significantly increasing costs and driver shortages. Whilst services in the West Midlands have seen passenger levels recover better than most other parts of the country this has resulted in a number of bus services being no longer viable to operate without public sector support and also a significant increase in the costs of providing the subsidised network. Taken collectively this has resulted in an £6m pressure to maintain a network equivalent to 90% of mileage operated prior to the pandemic.

Network Review

2. As a result of these pressures and as was a requirement of the DfT a comprehensive operator led network review was undertaken during the Autumn. The key outcome of the review was for operators to implement a network they believe is sustainable in the longer term and for TfWM to then assess the implications of those commercial changes and seek to mitigate the impact as far as possible within the policy framework and budget available to the Authority.
3. Following the review of the commercial networks and the impact on the subsidised services TfWM identified 39 services that were potentially 'at risk' against the access standards policy framework and the forecast outcome of the competitive tendering exercise.
4. The outcome is detailed below and the associated appendices.

Retained Services

5. Following the review of services of the 39 which were identified as being at risk 8 have been retained with no changes. Details of these services are available in Appendix A. Further details are available at the following link.

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/plan-your-journey/ways-to-travel/buses-in-the-west-midlands/upcoming-bus-changes/bus-service-changes-from-1-january-2023/>

Retained with Changes

6. The services listed in Appendix B have been retained with changes to the current provision. The reasons for the changes can be for a number of reasons including.
 - Changes to the commercial viability, route or times of commercial services.
 - Amendment to existing contracts to bring them within the value for money criteria of the access standards. Such changes could include reductions in frequency or overall hours of operation.
 - Service enhancements due to transformation change aligned with the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)
7. Further details on these service changes are available at the following web link.

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/plan-your-journey/ways-to-travel/buses-in-the-west-midlands/upcoming-bus-changes/bus-service-changes-from-1-january-2023/>

Withdrawn Services

8. Following a competitive tendering exercise, several services did not meet the revised value for money criteria specified within the TfWM access standards framework. These services will be withdrawn from 1st January 2023.
9. TfWM have been working with passengers and stakeholders to inform them of their next nearest alternative service including Ring & Ride and Demand Responsive Services, where available.
10. Appendix C provides a list of these services. Further details including alternative services available for passengers is available at.
11. <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/plan-your-journey/ways-to-travel/buses-in-the-west-midlands/upcoming-bus-changes/bus-service-changes-from-1-january-2023/>

School Services

12. As part of the network review process National Express had proposed to deregister 21 dedicated school bus services. Transport for West Midlands and stakeholders were clear that they were not supportive of any change to dedicated school services and particularly at the mid-point of the academic year.
13. National Express have subsequently reviewed this proposal and are retaining services or proposing alternatives as described in Appendix D.
14. Where services have changed TfWM have challenged National Express to ensure that sufficient and target engagement has been undertaken to ensure every parent, pupil and school knows what their revised arrangements from January.

BSIP Transformational Service Enhancements

15. As part of the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) several transformation objectives for the Bus Network were proposed. The network review provided an opportunity to meet some of these objectives whilst also seeking to mitigate the impact of the commercial changes on the network. The section below provides further details of these changes which are also summarised in the tables above.

South Birmingham

Service 46 - Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Northfield – Kings Heath

16. Introduction of a new service in South Birmingham which links the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Weoley Castle, Northfield, Hawkesley and Kings Heath. The service will provide new links for passengers and communities across south Birmingham. In addition the service will provide some excellent opportunities for passengers to connect with the extensive network of bus services in south Birmingham.

17. The service has been introduced to replace sections of existing commercial services 46 and 48 which are being withdrawn but designed to transform the bus service provision in the area.
18. The service will be comprehensive and operate regularly during the daytime period and have a full evening and Sunday provision.

Service 69 – Kings Heath – Solihull – Shirley

19. A new service which provides a improved replacement for existing subsidised service 69. The service will now operate between Kings Heath and Shirley Sainsbury's via Solihull town centre on Monday to Saturday daytimes.
20. Longer hours of operation are introduced, a more robust and reliable timetable and a new terminus in Kings Heath will enable onward connection to the wider network. This includes connecting with service 46 (Kings Heath to Queen Elizabeth Hospital). Both services will terminate at the same bus stop in Kings Heath and the timetables have been co-ordinated to enable passengers to easily transfer between services.

North Birmingham

Service 54 – Perry Barr to Hamstead

21. Provision of a full evening and Sunday daytime service on service 54.
22. The service reliability of service 54 had been adversely impacted during the past few years due to the highway works around Perry Barr in preparation for the Commonwealth Games. Since the completion of these highway works the service has operated consistently and this has allowed the daytime frequency of the service to be restored to every 30 minutes. This improvement with the opening of the new Perry Barr Interchange has led to a growth in passengers in recent months.
23. Now is seen as the ideal time to enhance the Sunday and evening service to provide more journeys which will enable more people to use the service as part of their day-to-day activities.

Service 61 – Aston – Perry Barr – West Bromwich

24. A new service which provides an improved replacement for existing subsidised service 61.
25. The service reliability of service 61 had been adversely impacted during the past few years due to the highway works around Perry Barr in preparation for the Commonwealth Games. Since the completion of these highway works running times have been consistent and combined with the opening of the new Perry Barr Interchange has led to a growth in passengers in recent months.
26. To continue the improvements with this service the route is changed in West Bromwich, with Halfords Lane introduced, which meets a long-standing request from the community

in this area for a re-instatement of a bus service and provides a direct connection with the Midland Metro.

27. The service is also extended beyond Perry Barr to provide new links to Great Barr, Scott Arms, partially replacing service 46.
28. With improvements to the Perry Barr district centre now in place following the Commonwealth Games now is seen as the ideal time to enhance the service to provide a more journeys opportunities to enable more people to use the service as part of their day-to-day activities.

Service 96 – Kingstanding / Erdington to Birmingham Airport

29. Provision of a full evening and Sunday daytime service on service 96. This additionally includes early morning journeys on Monday to Friday's which will operate ahead of the first journeys on the existing timetable.
30. In comparison to the Monday to Saturday daytime service these journeys will additionally extend beyond Chelmsley Wood Interchange and onwards towards Birmingham International Airport. This will provide requested links to Birmingham Airport and the direct and indirect employment opportunities around the site when the existing network of services is less frequent.
31. Service 96 is a largely unique service which serves many unique sections of routes and several local centres in the north and east Birmingham area. Based upon the usage levels and current growth being realised on the Monday to Saturday daytime service TfWM see a comprehensive evening and Sunday service will enhance the bus network and complement the existing provision. The new contract meets requested journey opportunities throughout the route and to Birmingham Airport.

Solihull

Service A9 Kingshurst to Solihull and Blythe Valley

32. To enhance and complement the existing Solihull network of services service A9 is introduced to provide new cross Solihull links. Operating between Kingshurst and Blythe Valley the service will provide a long-requested link between areas of North Solihull and South Solihull. This will provide improved connectivity in the district, opening up new transport links and the associated employment, education and leisure opportunities for passengers.
33. The service is an improved replacement for withdrawn commercial service 58 with new links provided to the employment and residential area of Blythe Valley.
34. The service will be comprehensive and operate regularly during the daytime period and also have a full evening and Sunday provision.

Service A15 Shirley Station to Lyndon

35. To enhance and complement the existing Solihull network of services service A15 is introduced in Solihull operating from Shirley to Lyndon via Acocks Green.
36. The service is an improved replacement for service 32 and offers a simplified network of services in the Lyndon area. This includes links with services A9 and A16 maintaining existing key links whilst improving co-ordination of services in the area. The service will be comprehensive and operate regularly during the daytime period.

Service A16 Yardley Swan – Lyndon – Acocks Green

37. To enhance and complement the existing Solihull network of services service A16 is introduced in Solihull and East Birmingham operating between Acocks Green and Yardley, Swan Shopping Centre via Lyndon.
38. The service is an improved replacement for service S16 and is part of a simplified network of services in the Lyndon area. This includes links with services A9 and A15, maintaining existing key links whilst improving co-ordination of services in the area. The service will be comprehensive and operate regularly during the daytime period, this enhances the existing span of operation enabling more passengers to use the service.

Dudley**Service 25 – Dudley – Merry Hill – Stourbridge**

39. A new service which provides new links for Stourbridge. The service is an improved replacement for existing subsidised service 250/251 and a section of withdrawn commercial service 11/11A.
40. The new service has been designed to enhance and complement the existing network of services in the Stourbridge, Netherton and Dudley areas and provides journey opportunities to the key leisure and retail destination of Merry Hill.
41. With a strong base of existing passengers, the new links across the borough of Dudley and a reliable timetable it is anticipated the service will be able to grow and develop into a strong service in the area.

Service 142 / 142A Halesowen – Stourbridge – Merry Hill

42. A new service 142/142A which provides an improved timetable with more journeys and new links to key destinations in the Dudley borough. The service maintains the key route between Halesowen and Stourbridge whilst extending northwards onto Merry Hill.

43. The service has been introduced to replace sections of services 28 and 298/299 with new cross Stourbridge journey opportunities provided.
44. The service will be comprehensive and operate regularly during the daytime period with an enhanced 30 minute frequency on the core sections of route and provide passengers with improved connectivity in the area.

Partnership Services

45. As part of the Network Review TfWM have worked with and facilitated discussions between commercial bus operators to improve the bus service provision on routes where there is commercial competition.
46. Work has been carried out on the services where existing partnership services are in place and also on routes where there is not an existing partnership operation. This has resulted in improved co-ordination or new co-ordination on some services.
47. The existing partnerships routes continue to have joint ticketing acceptance and a co-ordinated timetable. The new partnership routes do not have a joint ticketing agreement in place, however journeys are logically co-ordinated and/or evenly spaced so passengers can easily determine which operator is operating a journey.
48. An overview of the changes to existing partnership routes and the new partnerships routes are listed below;

Service 31/32 Walsall – Bloxwich – Mossley/Lower Farm (Diamond Bus and NXWM)

- *Existing Partnership Route.* Revised timetable introduced from 27 November 2022

Service 40 Wednesbury – West Bromwich (Diamond Bus and NXWM)

- *Existing Partnership Route.* Revised timetable introduced from 27 November 2022

Service 42/43 – West Bromwich – Great Bridge – Tipton/Bilston (Diamond Bus and NXWM)

- *Existing Partnership Route.* Revised timetable and route. Service 42 journeys no longer serve Dudley with service 229 providing alternative journeys between Tipton and Dudley. Introduced from 01 January 2023

Service 16/16W – Birmingham – Hampstead – West Bromwich/Great Barr (Diamond Bus and NXWM)

- *New Partnership Route.* Revised timetable and route. Timetables of service 16/16W journeys are co-ordinated with the new provision replacing existing service 46.

Service 45/401E – Walsall – Stone Cross – West Bromwich (Diamond Bus and NXWM)

- *Diamond Bus to operate all journeys.* A revised service 45 timetable is introduced replacing 401E journeys. Introduced from 01 January 2023.

Service 110, X3/X4/X5 – Birmingham – Sutton Coldfield – Tamworth (Arriva Bus and NXWM)

- *Improved timetable co-ordination between services.*

Services Requiring Further Review

49. A small number of services have had temporary provision put in place for the period 1st January 2023 to 15th April 2023. These services require further review early in the new year as a matter of priority. They remain at risk at this stage and any provision beyond 15th April 2023 will be dependent upon passenger usage, travel patterns and financial performance, alongside TfWM's access standards. Further detail on the routes concerned is presented in paragraphs 50 to 56.
50. TfWM presently has deminimis contractual arrangements with National Express West Midlands for the services detailed in Coventry. At the beginning of the service review process, NXWM had not identified that they would be unable to continue to resource these services. Notification of this was provided to TfWM at very short notice, which did not allow for a detailed review of data and any tender process. In the circumstances, TfWM arranged for temporary provision, as it was felt that customers being left without a service that had not previously been identified as "at risk" was unacceptable. It is noted that all of the Coventry services concerned provide for staff, patients and visitors travelling to/from University Hospital.
51. **20C Coventry to University Hospital via Arena Retail Park & Lentons Lane.** The 20C shares a common section of route with other services along Foleshill Road. Beyond Arena Retail Park, the 20C serves a number of roads for which it is the only bus service, including: Aldermans Green Road, Lentons Lane, Shilton Lane, Narberth Way and Boswell Drive. TfWM had already awarded a contract to Stagecoach Midlands for a new service 51 Coventry City Centre to Arena Retail Park. This service will now temporarily extend on an hourly frequency beyond Arena Retail Park to University Hospital via the 20C route between these points.
52. **20A Coventry to University Hospital.** National Express' commercial service for this route only provides journeys until 2015. Currently a late evening service operates beyond this time. Stagecoach Midlands have been awarded a temporary contract to provide an additional three journeys in each direction, on an hourly frequency to extend the service to circa 2300.
53. **Coventry Route 3 between Warwickshire Shopping Park & University Hospital.** National Express have taken the decision that this service will now terminate at Warwickshire Shopping Park and not continue to University Hospital. TfWM currently have a contracted route 60 Warwick University to Arena Retail Park via University Hospital. Agreement has been reached with Stagecoach Midlands to re-route this service on a temporary basis, so that it calls at Warwickshire Shopping Park then via Skipworth Road and Dorchester Way that would be otherwise without a service.

- 54. 25 Erdington (Six Ways) to Ward End (Fox & Goose).** This service was at risk due to relatively low passenger numbers. However, a bid was received to operate this service within the cost per passenger threshold (CPP). Regrettably when the contract was offered to the successful bidder, they declined to accept it. The next available bid was substantially higher and meant that the CPP threshold would have been significantly exceeded. In conjunction with service 600 below, a solution was identified with Diamond Bus that allowed one vehicle to be used to provide a simplified service on both routes until April 2023. The revised 25 will operate between Erdington and Bromford Bridge, albeit some roads will no longer be served. Alternative services have been recommended to passengers.
- 55. 600 Brookvale Park to Erdington (Six Ways).** Due to low passenger numbers, it was not possible to continue to extend the contract for this service. Diamond Bus agreed to a temporary contract to continue to provide a service 600 until April 2023. Following on from a bidder declining to accept service 25, Diamond Bus agreed a simplified timetable/route for both the 25 and 600 services, allowing a single vehicle to operate both services, ensuring some continuing provision for residents.
- 56. 78 Queslett to Sutton Coldfield via Streetly** During the early part of the review process, this service was identified “at risk” and subsequently recommended for withdrawal. Following receipt of an unusually high volume of correspondence, further investigations into the 78 service were conducted. An anomaly in the data collection arrangements for this service was discovered that meant not all passenger data had been visible to TfWM. On correcting this, it was found that retention of the service based on a recalculated CPP should be considered. The current operator of this service, Diamond Bus, have agreed to a temporary contract to continue the service unchanged until April 2023.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 57.** To manage the impact to customers and ensure residents are supplied with the relevant information regarding their travel options from January, a number of stakeholder letters were issued, and briefing sessions held with Councillors and MPs from across the region.
- 58.** On 11th October, a letter was sent from Anne Shaw, Executive Director of TfWM, to every leader, councillor, and MP in the West Midlands, outlining the reasoning for the network review, the steps that were being taken to mitigate any loss of service and a list of the services that were ‘at risk’ following the commercial operators review. This was followed by an offer of briefing sessions, by met area, where the team talked through in detail what was being done and the potential impacts to each area.
- 59.** Following the outcome of the first round of tenders, another letter was issued to the same recipient group on 5th December with an update of work that had been undertaken and the outcome these tenders.
- 60.** In addition to the above, the team have been in communication with a number of councillors and have answered any queries that have been directly sent.

Passenger Information

61. The scale of the review has resulted in significant change to the majority of passenger information displays across the bus network. This will include over 9,000 printed timetable displays, 1,500 bus stop flags and 1,630 RTI electronic information displays. This is across the network at stops, interchanges, and bus stations.
62. Unfortunately, due to the scale of the review and the significantly condensed timescales, it has not been possible to update all of the information prior to the changes on the 1st January. However, we have displayed over 5,000 posters across the network informing passengers of the up coming changes and providing links to digital up to date information. The same information has also been provided to local libraries and other community hubs, for whom we have contact information, requesting that the poster be displayed in a prominent area.
63. Passengers without access to digital information can access the same information and timetables by calling the TfWM customer contact centre and also by speaking to the passenger support team at TfWMs Bus Stations.
64. We have worked with Bus Operators to provide information on buses and particularly where operators are changing, or services are no longer being operated.

Future Operator Support

65. The DfT have confirmed that further funding will be available for bus operators and local transport authorities for the period January to March 2023. This will enable operators to continue to commit to the 90% network implemented on 1st January 2023. However, National Express have indicated that without further support it is unlikely that this network will be sustainable. TfWM in conjunction with the other city regions continue to liaise with the DfT to communicate this significant risk and seek longer term funding for local bus services.
66. National Express have informed us that a further 10% of the network could be at risk from June 2023 without additional funding or revenue. Our ability to mitigate the impact of further commercial de-registrations is significantly diminished given we have fully committed the budget for subsidised bus service for 2023 / 2024 as part of this network review process.
67. Proposals within the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan will also deliver passenger growth and therefore revenues for bus operators and efficiency savings for reinvestment back into the bus network. Operators have already committed to a fares freeze to 2025, reform of fares and ticketing will commence from early Spring 2023 followed by a £multi-million ticketing incentive programme and an unprecedented programme of bus priority measures. These initiatives will be subject to separate reports to TDC.
68. TfWM are working through the Trail Blazing Devolution Deal including the devolution of Bus Service Operators Grant, which is currently paid to operators direct by the DfT to reimburse for fuel duty and other initiatives. Devolving this locally would enable the

funding to be targeted to delivering aspects of the network important for the region. DfT have been suggesting reform of BSOG, we don't yet know whether Government intent to maintain the existing level of funding and seek to do more with operators for the money or reduce the pot overall. TfWM believe that any reduction in funding will lead directly to a reduction in local services.

69. TfWM have committed to continue to pay operators for acceptance of travel under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) at pre-Covid patronage estimates until the end of December 2022. At the time of writing the rate for future payments of ENCTS is undecided.

Network Performance

70. At the time of writing the performance of the network remains challenging for passengers. In week commencing 10th December 4% of all mileage was not operated largely due to driver shortages although an increase in congestion due to increased shopping and leisure traffic exasperated by the rail strikes has also contributed.
71. It is anticipated by National Express that the changes to the Network in January will have a positive impact on performance and positively the month of November saw the number of new drivers entering National Express exceed those leaving.
72. From January future funding for West Midlands bus operators will be directly linked to their performance in delivering the network. It is hoped this will further improve performance across the network.

3. Financial Implications

73. All but three De Minimis contracts for the Network Review have now been reviewed, with contracts awarded accordingly. The cost of all of the renewals and extensions to date will be £30.6m across the life of the contracts with £3.84m falling in 2022/23 and £12.74m falling in 2023/24. This includes £9.93m worth of contracts which will be funded by BSIP between 1st January 2023 and 31st March 2025. The contracts which have been awarded are affordable within the annual budget allocation.

4. Legal Implications

74. There are no new legal implications for WMCA as a result of this report.

5. Impact on Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan

75. The retraction of the West Midlands local bus network resulting from this review will have significant impacts on the achievement of West Midlands Local Transport Plan 5 (WM LTP 5) and affect progress across a range of socio-economic outcomes. The draft Local Transport Plan Core Strategy sets out the key challenges where changing transport can help us deliver inclusive growth and address the impacts of transport on people, places and the environment. These are framed in the 5 Motives for Change:

- Sustaining economic success
- Creating a fairer society
- Supporting local communities and places
- Becoming more active
- Tackling the climate emergency

76. The Core Strategy sets out that significant behaviour change is required to our travel behaviours to make positive progress on the Motives for Change. To do this we need to be aiming to deliver three key transport system impacts:

- Reduce overall levels of traffic
- Improve accessibility
- Electrify the transport system

77. The bus is the primary mode of public transport in the West Midlands accounting for approximately 80% of all public transport trips in the region. The network provides an essential transport choice for 25% of West Midlands residents who do not own or have access to a car. People with cars can access more than those without and West Midlands residents could access more than double the job opportunities within 45 minutes of where they live with a car than without a car and these reductions to the West Midlands bus network will exacerbate this issue.

78. The level of travel behaviour changes to help the West Midlands and the UK reach net zero is significant. It is estimated that to meet national carbon targets (net zero by 2050) would require car mileage to be 10% lower in 2031 than what it is predicted to be, and for local WM2041 targets (net zero 2041) it would need to be 35% lower. Shifting trips away from private car onto sustainable modes is central to this. As set out in the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan, the bus must play a pivotal part in creating an integrated transport network where everyone can thrive without a driving licence and the need to own an expensive vehicle.

79. There is a worry that the changes proposed in the Bus Network Review may jeopardise these wider policy changes proposed in the WM LTP 5, where an effective high quality bus network is available to people, to support those 25% of households without a car to access vital opportunities in the region and to reach net zero targets which include a significant reduction in car usage.

6. Equalities Implication

80. The changes outlined in this report will have a negative equality impact on communities in the region. Some protected characteristics are especially likely to be impacted.

81. Levels of deprivation impact the likelihood of being able to purchase a car. People on the lowest income are much less likely to own a car and some of the most deprived wards have under 50% household car ownership. Groups much more likely to be reliant on

public transport are: Single parents (primarily women); young and older people; black and minority ethnic people (minority ethnic people twice more likely to live in a household with no car ownership); people on low incomes; part-time workers; unemployed people (3/4 of jobseekers do not own a car); disabled people (only 38% of people with mobility difficulties are main drivers or have household access to a vehicle).

82. Most bus and foot travel are made by individuals from the lowest income groups whereas train, metro and bicycle trips are mainly made by those who fall within the highest income groups. A significant percentage of West Midlands residents rely on public transport, primarily buses, to get around. White British people are more likely to live in a household with access to a car or van than any other ethnic group. Black people are more than twice as likely as white people to live in a household with no access to a car or van. There has been a marked drop in car ownership amongst young people. Even though car ownership can pose an advantage to many, 67% of car-owning households in the lower income groups report experiencing car related economic stress as running costs can be prohibitive. People who depend more on bus for work tend to be lower paid, live in more deprived areas and are more likely to turn down jobs due to transport issues, than those on higher incomes, who tend to use cars and trains more often. Research has shown that there is a marked relationship between job accessibility by bus and employment outcomes. Issues with transport have been linked to low participation in post-16 education and college dropouts – which mostly impacts low-income households.
83. The reduction and changes to the subsidised network are also likely to especially impact women who are more likely to complete multi-purpose trips in contrast to direct commuting patterns. Finally, disabled people or/and older people or/and people with mobility difficulties are also likely to be especially impacted as walking distances to bus stops will increase, making public transport inaccessible to many.
84. To better understand impact a Health and Equity impact assessment was undertaken the key findings of which were as follows:
- The services identified as higher risk, at the outset of the review, showcase low patronage figures. High risk services range between 39 to 400 passengers per week, averaging 0-7 passengers per journey.
 - Nearly 40% of users of the services noted as higher risk are concessionary pass holders.
 - Alternative services have been identified for high-risk services to mitigate as much as possible, any negative impact on customers.
 - Recommended mitigations highlighted within the report include communicating the changes to customers as soon as possible in a variety of ways, such as on bus shelters and stops, talking newspapers and key community groups. Communications need to include alternative options.
85. Overall, whilst a negative impact is anticipated, it is expected to be low/ medium due to the low levels of patronage and the fact that alternative services have been identified. The impact assessment took into account the initial 21 services identified as being at

higher risk of withdrawal. By making the decision to retain some of these services, it's now been decided that only 12 services will be removed, it substantially mitigates any negative equality impact. However, it is important to acknowledge that for a low number of customers, they may be severely impacted should the alternative provision not be suitable and/or convenient. It is also important to take into account the fact that savings obtained through the removal of these services will be reinvested into improving the transport provision for the region, which will have a longer-term positive impact for all.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

86. There are no specific inclusive growth implications arising from the noting of this update however, buses are the most important part of the public transport system to the majority of people in the West Midlands, and is therefore crucial that people are informed, can access bus services in a way which is safe, convenient and affordable. Buses will also be an important component of the region's transition to net zero. As such, bus patronage will be a key indicator of how clean and inclusive the region's economy is and should be watched closely.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

87. This report covers the constituent area of the Combined Authority but due to the importance of cross boundary services – into and out of the constituent area – partnership working with non-constituent and shire authorities is crucial in delivering the activities referred to in this report.

Appendix A – Retained Services with No Changes.

Service	Route	Comment
9	Leasowes Ave to Coventry Rail Station	Evenings and Sundays - Retained
30	West Bromwich to Stone Cross	Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday - Retained
35/35A	Aldridge / Leighswood to Walsall	Monday to Saturday daytime - Retained
66	Stone Cross to West Bromwich	Monday to Saturday daytime - Retained
74A	Dudley to West Bromwich	Monday to Saturday daytime - Retained
78	Sutton Coldfield to Streetly	Monday to Saturday daytime – Retained to April 2023
226	Dudley to Merry Hill	Evenings and Sundays - Retained
229	Dudley to Bilston	Evenings and Sundays - Retained

Appendix B – Retained services with changes

Service	Route	Comment
7	Coventry to Brownhill Green	From 1 st January 2023 Stagecoach will operate this service from 6pm and on Sundays. National Express will continue to operate this service to 6pm.
10	Birmingham to Woodgate Valley North	From 1 st January this service will be operated by Kev's Coaches and have a new route, timetable and service number.
10A / 10C	Stourbridge (Circular)	From 1 st January this service, operated by Kev's Coaches, will be replaced by service 88 (Stourbridge to Norton)
10S	Ridgacre to Selly Oak	From 1 st January this service will be renumbered service 55 and will extend to Longbridge with a new timetable. Kev's Coaches will provide this service.
11/11A	Merry Hill to Dudley	From 1 st January this service will be renumbered service 25 and will extend to Stourbridge with a new timetable. Diamond Bus will provide this service.
25	Erdington to Ward End	From 3 rd January 2023 this service will have an updated route and timetable. The change of route means that some roads will be unserved. Passengers have been informed of their nearest alternative services. All areas remain within the distance criteria within the access standards.
26A	Wolverhampton to Stowlawn	Service will be renumbered service 26.
38	Northfield to Selly Oak	From 1 st January this service will be renumbered service 55 and will extend to Ridgacre and Harborne
41	Walsall to Willenhall	Sunday evening services to be operated by National Express
42	Hollymoor Way to West Heath	From 1 st January this service will be renumbered service 55 and will extend to Ridgacre and Harborne
54	Hamstead Village to Perry Barr	This service will have an enhanced timetable to include additional Monday to Saturday evening journeys and a comprehensive Sunday service.
61	Perry Barr to West Bromwich	New Route and Timetable
65	Woods Estate to Darlaston	Service will be operated by Walsall Community Transport
69	Solihull to Brandwood Park	Stagecoach will provide this service across the revised service 46 (QE Hospital to Kings Heath) and 69 (Kings Heath to Shirley via Solihull).
71	Sutton Coldfield to Chelmsley Wood	Sundays will be operated by Stagecoach.
96	Chelmsley Wood to Kingstanding	Provided by Diamond Bus with a new and improved timetable including journeys extending to Birmingham Airport. Kingstanding to Erdington section served after 6pm and on Sundays and some early morning services.
250/251	Stourbridge to Merry Hill (Circular)	Replaced by service 25 (Dudley to Stourbridge via Merry Hill & Brockmoor). This service will be provided by Diamond Bus with frequency enhancements from a bus every hour to every 30mins.

298/299	Stourbridge to Pedmore Fields (Circular)	Replaced by 142A (Merry Hill to Halesowen) This service will be provided by Diamond Bus.
600	Erdington to Brookvale Park Circular	This service will operate an amended route and timetable which means that some roads will no longer be directly served. Passengers have been informed of the amended route and available alternatives.



Appendix C – Withdrawn Services

Service	Route	Comment
22	Tipton to Wednesbury	Complete service withdrawn
26	Walsall to Blackenhall	Complete service withdrawn
30	Darlaston to Bilston	Complete service withdrawn
34	Kings Heath to Birmingham	Complete service withdrawn
36	Walsall to Alumwell (Circular)	Service will not operate after 6pm and on Sundays
42	Brownshill Green to Coventry	Complete service withdrawn
50	Wednesfield to Wolverhampton	Complete service withdrawn
68A / 68C	Perry Barr to Aston Six Ways (Circular	Complete service withdrawn
89	Queslett to Erdington	Complete service withdrawn
89	Solihull to Coventry	Complete service withdrawn
93	Smiths Wood to Small Heath	Complete service withdrawn
424	Queslett to Perry Barr	Complete service withdrawn

Appendix D – School Services

Service	School	Area Served	Status
15	King Edwards High School	Acocks Green / Solihull	Retained
58S	Lode Heath School	Yardley	TfWM contract withdrawn – revised contract A9 to provide alternative - operated by Stagecoach.
714	Compton Park School	Upper Penn	Retained
751	Smestow School	Upper Penn	Retained
784	The King's School	Pendeford	Retained
788	Barr Beacon School	Walsall	Retained
794	Compton Park School	Bushbury	Revised to operate with two buses to speed up journey times.
815	John Willmott / Fairfax Schools	Sutton / Erdington	Retained
822	King Edwards Five Ways	Birmingham	Revised – terminate at Harborne
823	Hillcrest School	Birmingham	Withdrawn – passengers are suggested to use service 23
829	St Pauls Girl School (am/pm)	Birmingham	Revised to operate with just one bus in the afternoon.
829A	St Pauls Girl School (pm)	Birmingham	
855	Bishop Walsh School	Sutton Coldfield	Retained
863	Light Hall School	Yardley	Retained
869	Plantsbrook School	Perry Common	Withdrawn – passengers are suggested to use service 66.
C53	West Coventry Academy	Spon End, Coventry	Retained
C54	West Coventry Academy	Coventry	Retained
C55	West Coventry Academy	Allesley Park, Coventry	Retained
838/A	John Willmott School	Stockland Green	Timetable amended and renumbered 813
839	John Willmott School	Pype Hayes	Timetable amended and renumbered 814

This page is intentionally left blank

The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

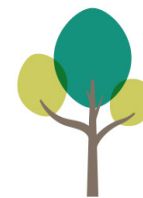
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
3	Purchase of two Diesel Double Deck buses for Youth Services Contact Officer: Dawn Maleki/James Darby Director: Michael Jarrett, Director of Children and Education	Cabinet Member – Children and Education (Cllr Hackett)	March 2023		Report by Director of Children and Education



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
5	Trees Strategy and Policy Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins Director – Borough Economy, Alice Davey	Cabinet - Environment Service (Cllr Ahmed) Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)	15 March 2023		



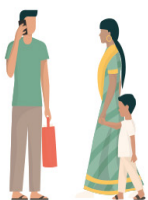
Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
6	Parking Enforcement Contract Exemption Contact Officer: Fiona McLaughlin, Robin Weare, Mark Bodley Director: Alice Davey, Simone Hines	Cabinet - Environment Service (Cllr Ahmed)	15 March 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
11	Levelling Up Fund Local Authority Memorandum of Understanding, Grant Determination Letter & Assurance Framework Contact Officer: Gemma Ryan Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)	15 March 2023		



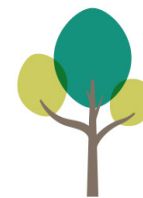
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
12	<p>Preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order report to support retail acquisitions in West Bromwich Town Centre</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alexander Oxley</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	15 March 2023		



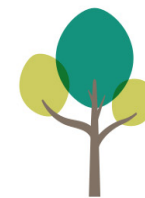
Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
13	Demolition Framework 2023-2027 procurement Contact Officer. Mark Drake Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 March 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
14	Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan and Procurement Strategy Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth	Cabinet - Regeneration & Growth (Cllr Hughes)	15 March 2023		
16	Parking Charges Policy Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director – Alice Davey, Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment Services (Cllr Ahmed)	June 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
22	Asset Transfer of Hurst Road and Charlemont Community Centres Contact Officer: Nick Garratt / Manny Sehmbi Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing	Cabinet - Housing (Cllr Padda)	June 2023	N/A	-Community Centre Asset Transfer Report -Equality Impact Assessment -Quality Assurance Document



The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in private session:-

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered

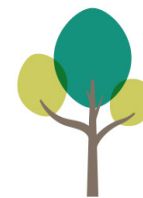


Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)

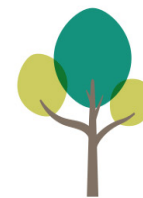
Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Review of Fees and Charges		January		
	Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools		January/February		
	Schools Funding		December/January		
	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring		February		
	Council Finances		February		
	Financial Regulations		February		
	Business Plans		February		
	Highways Asset Management Plan		March		
	Local Transport Settlement		March		



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Revenues and Benefits Policy framework 2022/23		March		
	Schools Capital Programme		April to June		
	Financial Outturn		May		
	Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules		July		
	Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges		May – July		
	Childcare Sufficiency Report		July - September		
	Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring		August		



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Model Schools Pay Policy		October/November		
	Winter Service Operational Plan		October/November		
	Road Safety Plan		November		
	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring		November		
	Council Tax Base Calculation		December		
	Business Rates Retention Estimates		December		
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		December		



Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2022/23

Economy, Skills Transport and Environment



Standing Items:-

- Tracking and Monitoring of Recommendations to the Executive
- Work Programme (including Cabinet Forward Plan)

Meeting Date	Item	Presented by
14 July 2022	Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership	Sarah Middleton (Chief Executive of Black Country Consortium Limited)
	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim (Towns Fund Programme Manager)
16 th November 2022	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim (Towns Fund Programme Manager)
	Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	Robin Weare (Assistant Director – Highways)/ Tony McGovern
9 th February 2023	Sandwell Development Plan Issues & Options	Andy Miller
	Friar Park Masterplan	Tammy Stokes/ Joshua Singh
9 th March 2023	Bus Service Improvement Plan	Andy Miller
	Outcome of E-Scooters Trial	Andy Miller

Items to be scheduled:

Review of private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy – late 2022/early 2023

Local Transport Plan – TfWM via Andy Miller

Corporate Fleet Management – Ben Percival; schedule for 2023/24 as per Alice Davey/Cllr Taylor (27/2/2023)

Visit to Europa cycle path to be scheduled

Update from Officer's in relation to Europa cycle path petition – Briefing Note

Scrutiny Review/s**Review of the 2017-2022 Strategic Road Safety Plan**